

Glossary

Asylee: A person who has been granted asylum in the United States due to fear of persecution in their home country. Asylees are immediately eligible to work in the US after receiving asylum. Asylees can apply for LPR after one year. They can apply for citizenship after five more years as a LPR (Freedom for Immigrants, n.d.).

Asylum seeker: Asylum seekers are individuals who are seeking refuge in their current country of residence due to persecution in their home country. Asylum seekers generally leave their home country for reasons of war, violence, or persecution, similar to refugees. However, unlike refugees, asylum seekers are already in the US or at a US border and requesting permission to remain in the US. Asylum seekers must argue their case in front of a judge and prove persecution in their home country before they are granted asylum (Freedom for Immigrants, n.d.).

Authorized to work: An individual who is legally allowed to work in the US. For example, citizens, asylees, refugees, and green card holders are fully authorized to work without sponsorship (Justia, 2019). Other visa holders may be eligible work in the US for a certain time period (such as F-1 visa holders) or may require sponsorship (such as H-1B visa holders) (Rhoads, 2021).

DACA & Dreamers: A “Dreamer” (often also spelled “DREAMer”) refers to an immigrant who qualifies for the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. Dreamers are also frequently referred to as “DACA recipients”, though this term is specific to Dreamers who have applied for and the latter specifically refers to Dreamers who have applied for and received DACA status. The Dream Act was first introduced in Congress in 2001 as a pathway to citizenship for youth who were brought to the US as children without documentation. After the failure of Congress in passing the Dream Act, the Obama Administration created a temporary program called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) to assist eligible youth. The DACA program protects recipients from deportation and allows them to legally work in the US. DACA status must be renewed every two years, which means it does not provide permanent protection or a pathway to citizenship (Hildreth, 2020).

Diversity Lottery: The diversity lottery refers to the lottery program in which individuals can apply for LPR in the US. Individuals apply for this program in their home country and, if accepted, arrive in the US as an LPR. Lottery admissions are individuals from countries deemed to be underrepresented in terms of immigration to the US. The lottery program dispenses 55,000 visas per year (FAIR, n.d.)

Employment Authorization Document (EAD): A document issued by USCIS which immigrants may have to confirm their eligibility to work. EADs are usually held when immigrants have a pending citizenship, asylum, or green card application. If immigrants have refugee status, citizenship, or a green card, they can prove work authorization through documentation other than an EAD (SGM Law Group, 2020).

Employment Authorization Document (EAD): An Employment Authorization Document (EAD) is one way for employers to verify legal authorization to work in the US. Refugees, asylum seekers, or others may have an EAD while they are applying for an adjustment of immigration status. If an individual possesses a green card, they do not need an EAD to demonstrate work eligibility (USCIS, n.d.).

Employment Sponsorship: A type of visa in which employers can hire foreign individuals who can live and work in the US for a certain amount of time, in order to complete a specific job. Employers must petition the US government for these visas and “sponsor” travel to the US. Employers must provide certain assurances for these visas: a) the company needs a specific worker to fill this position, b) the position cannot be filled by local employees, and c) the individual must travel to the US to complete the job requirements (JacksonWhite, 2019).

English Language Learner (ELL): Individuals whose native language is not English and who are in the process of learning the language. They may require the use of language access tools such as interpretation or translation. The following terms may also be used: English learners (ELs) or limited English proficient (LEP) (Great Schools Partnership, 2013).

Green Card: The document held by Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) which indicates their legal immigration status in the US. Refugees can apply for a green card after 1 year in the US (Freedom for Immigrants).

Immigrant: An immigrant is any person who lives in a country other than their country of birth (Bolter, 2019).

Language Access: “Language access” means providing Limited English Proficient (LEP) people with reasonable access to the same services as English-speaking individuals. This often means providing interpretation or translation services to individuals who would like to receive services in their native language. Agencies which receive federal funding are required to provide language access services under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Migration Policy Institute, n.d.).

Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR): A Lawful Permanent Residence (LPR) is an immigrant who is legally admitted to the US for permanent residence. These individuals may also be referred to as “green card holders”. There are various ways for an individual to apply for LPR. Many individuals are sponsored by employers or family members in the US, others may become LPRs through refugee or asylee status. LPRs are fully authorized to work in the US and generally have the same rights as US citizens. However, LPRs are not eligible to vote or hold certain public office/civil service positions. LPRs can be detained or deported for certain crimes. LPRs are generally eligible to apply for US citizenship in five years (three years in some situations) (Freedom for Immigrants).

Refugee: Refugees are persons who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and crossed an international border to find safety in another country. Refugees are protected in international law through the 1951 Refugee Convention as: “someone who is unable or unwilling

to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.” Refugees generally spend about 10-15 years in a refugee camp before being resettled in another country. Refugees are fully eligible to work and apply for welfare benefits once they arrive in the US (UNCHR, n.d.).

Title VI of Civil Rights Act: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a Federal law that protects persons from discrimination based on their race, color or national origin in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Title VI requires all agencies which receive federal funding to provide language access services if necessary. Some examples of institutions or programs that may receive Federal assistance and be covered by Title VI are: hospitals and health clinics, Medicaid and Medicare agencies, alcohol and drug treatment centers, extended care facilities, public assistance programs, nursing homes, adoption agencies, day care, mental health programs, and senior citizen centers (US Department of Health & Human Services, 2013).

Undocumented/Out of Status: Although the terms “alien” or “illegal immigrant” are sometimes used, the most appropriate terms to use for individuals without legal immigration status in the US are “undocumented” or “out of status”.. Although “Alien” is a term used in the Immigration and Nationality Act to refer to non-citizens, it should generally be avoided. The term “illegal immigrant” is also not preferred as it perpetuates the stereotype that all undocumented persons in the US have committed crimes. Currently it is not a criminal offense to overstay a visa or enter the US without inspection; it is a civil violation (Freedom for Immigrants). A person who is undocumented does not have legal authorization to work in the United States.

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): USCIS is the government agency which oversees the nation’s immigration system. All refugees and immigrants applying for immigration status are processed through USCIS.

The information provided in this document does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all information, content, and materials available are for general informational purposes only. Please contact a legal representative for more information and/or legal advice.

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Pittsburgh Area Non-Profit Legal Immigration Resources

AJAPO

2900 Bedford Ave
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
412-391-4985

http://www.ajapopittsburgh.org/about_us1.aspx

Christian Immigration Advocacy Center

Allegheny Center Alliance Church
250 East Ohio Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
412-532-6181

<https://www.ciacpgh.org/>

Immigration Law Clinic

University of Pittsburgh, School of Law
3900 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-648-1300

Justice at Work

305 34th Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15201
412-636-2473

www.friendsfw.org

JFCS Legal Immigration Department

5743 Bartlett St.
Pittsburgh, PA, 15217
412-904-5966

<https://www.jfcspgh.org/services/immigration-legal-services/services/>

Allegheny County Resources for Refugees & Immigrants

JFCS Refugee & Immigrant Services: Provides refugee resettlement services, case management, employment services, youth programming, and peer-led support groups.

412-422-7200

refugee@jfcspgh.org

<https://www.jfcspgh.org/services/refugee-immigrant-services/resettlement-services/>

Immigrant Services & Connections (ISAC): Five-agency partnership led by JFCS which provides information, referrals and services coordination to immigrants of any status. ISAC also provides training for agencies best practices for working with refugees and immigrants..

Partners include: Literacy Pittsburgh, South Hills Interfaith Movement (SHIM), Casa San Jose, and the AIU Latino Family Center.

412-742-4200

isac@jfcspgh.org

<https://isacpittsburgh.org/>

Acculturation for Justice, Access, and Peace Outreach (AJAPO): Provides refugee resettlement services, case management, legal immigration services, and youth programming.

(412) 391-4985 or (412) 391-5184

info@ajapopittsburgh.org.

http://www.ajapopittsburgh.org/about_us1.aspx

Hello Neighbor: Provides mentoring support and youth programming for refugee and immigrant families.

412-567-3946

info@helloneighbor.io

<https://www.helloneighbor.io/>

Literacy Pittsburgh: Provides free English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, citizenship classes, GED classes, employment services, and family literacy programs. Literacy Pittsburgh is also an ISAC program partner.]

412-393-7600

412-393-7627 fax

info@literacypittsburgh.org

<https://www.literacypittsburgh.org/>

South Hills Interfaith Movement (SHIM): Operates a food pantry, free clothing closet, provides youth programming, and various other supportive services. SHIM is also an ISAC program partner.

(412) 854-9120

info@shimcares.org

<https://shimcares.org/>

Casa San Jose: Provides legal immigration support, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, youth programming, and advocacy for the Latinx population. All employees are fluent in Spanish. Casa San Jose is also an ISAC partner.

412-726-7167

info@casasanjose.org

<https://casasanjose.org/>

Latino Community Center: Provides English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, youth programming, family support, and case management.

412-335-7446

info@latinocommunitycenter.org

<https://www.latinocommunitycenter.org/>

Squirrel Hill Health Center: Provides sliding scale medical, dental, and mental health care. Staff are trained on working with interpreters.

412-422-7442

info@squirrelhillhealthcenter.org

<https://squirrelhillhealthcenter.org/>

Welcoming Pittsburgh: A City of Pittsburgh initiative which aims to bring together service providers and community members to create a more welcoming environment for newcomers. The Welcoming Pittsburgh group meets on a monthly basis to review progress towards the Welcoming Pittsburgh Roadmap and discuss current needs.

welcomingpgh@pittsburghpa.gov

<https://pittsburghpa.gov/wp/>