

ABC's of Immigration Law

ASYLEE	Fled home country due to fear of persecution; came to the U.S., often spending 2-8 months in a detention facility while waiting for an immigration judge to hear his/her case for asylum. Eligible to apply for a green card (permanent residency) after one year, and citizenship 5 years after being approved for a green card. Many don't obtain their green cards after one year because the government fee is \$1,225.
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Work permit opportunity if lived continuously in U.S. since 06/15/2007 and were under age 16 when first arrived; under age 31 as of 06/15/2012; only minor criminal violations; high school grad/GED. NO PATH TO PERMANENT RESIDENCY OR CITIZENSHIP; CANNOT PETITION FOR ANY FAMILY MEMBERS. Travel is only allowed with prior permission, and only for work, school, or exigent humanitarian reasons.
DHS	Department of Homeland Security. Approves petitions to immigrate family members, work permits, applications for naturalization, green cards (permanent residency)
DOS	Department of State. Oversees embassies, consulates, visa approval/denial
DV	Diversity Visa Lottery. Opportunity to win one of 50,000 visas (worldwide, annually) to the U.S. for citizens of countries that do not emigrate many people to the U.S. (NOT ELIGIBLE: Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China (mainland-born), Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, South Korea, United Kingdom (except Northern Ireland) and its dependent territories, and Vietnam.)
LPR	Lawful Permanent Resident (green card holder). Able to live and work in the U.S. indefinitely but still subject to removal (deportation) for major criminal or immigration violations. CANNOT VOTE or petition to bring parents, siblings, or married children to the U.S. Can immigrate spouses and unmarried children in about 2 to 20 years. Disability and some social service benefits are limited.
IR	Immediate Relative. A U.S. Citizen's Immediate Relatives include his/her spouse, parents, and unmarried children under age 21. If a USC petitions to bring an IR to the U.S., they will come as soon as paperwork is approved and fees are paid. There is no 'waiting line' for a visa that other relatives experience.
NOTARIO	Person purporting to be an immigration specialist. These people are practicing law without a license, often scam hopeful immigrants by promising work permits and green cards in exchange for hundreds of dollars. If they file petitions for their clients, they are often fraudulent.
NVC	National Visa Center, which is part of the Department of State (DOS). The NVC processes petitions that were approved by USCIS before sending them to the Embassies abroad. There is not an NVC in the simulation; all documents and fees will be submitted to either USCIS or the Embassy.
PD	Priority Date. See Visa Bulletin.
REFUGEE	Fled home country due to fear of persecution; resettled in a third country where received United Nations refugee designation. Waited 2 to 20 years in a refugee camp before being able to come to the U.S. Eligible to apply for a green card (permanent residency) one year after entering the U.S., and eligible to apply for citizenship five years after entering U.S. (must get green card first).
SIJS	Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. Unaccompanied minors who have no parent to care for them can petition a state family court to award their custody to a guardian or to the state. With that order, they can apply for SIJS with USCIS. If approved, they will receive a green card. Children in this status cannot petition for their biological parents.
USC	U.S. Citizen. USCs can petition for spouses, children, parents, and siblings. Spouses, parents, and unmarried children under 21 can often immigrate in about a year. Children over 21, married children, and siblings of the USC wait 7 to 22 years, depending on country of citizenship.
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services, a part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Approves petitions to immigrate family members, work permits, applications for naturalization, green cards (permanent residency), etc.
USD	U.S. Dollars
VISA BULLETIN	The visa bulletin is the U.S. Department of State's publication that shows how many visas are available (worldwide) per Preference Category for the current month. Beneficiaries are in a Preference Category if they are the spouse, child (unmarried and under 21), or unmarried adult (over 21) son/daughter of a Lawful Permanent Resident; the adult son or daughter of a USC; or the sibling of an adult USC. A new visa bulletin is published once per month, and provides the current 'Priority Dates' for which visas are available. Petitions are given priority dates that are approximately when the petitions are received. See attached Visa Bulletin if you are applying for someone in a Preference Category.