

Other Ways to Get a Work Permit or a Green Card

There are many ways to obtain lawful immigration status. Each one depends on the facts of the case. LSC represents youth in [Special Immigrant Juvenile Status](#), [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#), [U Visa](#), and [T Visa](#).

Other common options for obtaining lawful status which **LSC cannot help** with include:

Family Based Petitions

If you have a parent, step-parent, or spouse who is a lawful permanent resident (has a green card) or is a U.S. Citizen, they also might be able to help you get a green card. If you didn't enter with a visa, this process can be complicated and you might have to go back to your home country for an interview so for this option you should be sure to do only with the help of an attorney or an accredited representative. If you have a brother or sister who is a U.S. Citizen, they could also petition for you, but that would not help you immediately because that waiting list is very long. Check the local referral list or look for other nonprofit or low cost providers at <http://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/>

Asylum

If you are afraid of returning to your home country, you might be able to apply for asylum even if you are afraid of members of your own family. For asylum it is best to apply in your first year of being in the U.S. or within a few months of turning 18, but even if you are over 18 and have been here a long time, it is a good idea to consult with a nonprofit immigration agency to see if you have a possible asylum case. Applying for asylum can lead to being sent to immigration court, so it is important to discuss the risks of applying with an attorney or accredited representative and apply with their help if you decide to apply. It is also very important to always tell the truth in your application. Check the local referral list or look for other nonprofit or low cost providers at <http://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/>

Cancellation of Removal

If you have been here in the U.S. for at least 10 years and you have a spouse, parent, or child who is a U.S. Citizen or a lawful permanent resident (has a green card) and you are in removal proceedings, you might be able to apply for a green card if you can show that your family member will suffer "exceptional and extremely unusual hardship." These cases are not easy to win, so be wary of anyone who wants to get you into removal proceedings in order to apply. Just having 10 years of living in the U.S. and a child born here is enough to apply, but not necessarily enough to win. Check the local referral list or look for other nonprofit or low cost providers at <http://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/>

Temporary Protected Status

Certain countries have been designated as being eligible for "Temporary Protected Status" or TPS. This is a way to get a work permit if you entered before the date the program started.

As of August of 2015, countries in this program included:

- El Salvador (if you entered before March 9, 2001)
- Guinea (if you entered before November 20, 2015)
- Haiti (if you entered before January 12, 2011)

- Honduras (if you entered before December 30, 1998)
- Liberia (if you entered before November 20, 2014)
- Nepal (if you entered before June 24, 2015)
- Nicaragua (if you entered before December 30, 1998)
- Sierra Leone (if you entered before November 20, 2014)
- Somalia (if you entered before May 1, 2012)
- Sudan (if you entered before January 9, 2013)
- South Sudan (if you entered before September 2, 2014)
- Syria (if you entered before January 5, 2015)

For more information on TPS including a list of countries who are currently included go to the USCIS website: <http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status-deferred-enforced-departure/temporary-protected-status>

If you entered on time, but never applied before, but one of your parents applied on time, you might be able to apply late if you are under 21 years old. Check the local referral list or look for other nonprofit or low cost providers at <http://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/>

Student or Exchange Visas (F, M, or J Visas)

There are certain non-immigrant visas that allow you to go to school in the U.S. If you entered without inspection or are now out of status, you most likely are not eligible for one of these visas. The most common student visa is the F-1 and you would need to be enrolled in a qualifying school and not initially need to work to support yourself. You would also have to pay the higher non-resident tuition and would not be eligible for financial aid. The M visa is for vocational studies and has similar restrictions. The J-1 can be used for study or work depending on your program, but again needs you to be in lawful status or applying from abroad. All of these visas require that you have the intent of only living here temporarily and planning to return to your home country once you have finished your course or program.

If you are here in status and want to change status or extend your stay, it is very important to do that before your current period of stay expires.

Most nonprofit agencies do not help with non-immigrant visas like these, so to get help, you should contact your local bar association attorney referral line so that they can refer you to a private immigration attorney. In San Francisco, you can call the Bar Association of San Francisco and their number is 415-989-1616.

Employment Based Visas

If you have a job or a job offer and your employer wants to help you stay here and get a work permit or a green card, that is usually only possible if you have a degree and you are already in lawful status.

Most nonprofit agencies do not help with employment based cases like these, so to get help, you should contact your local bar association attorney referral line so that they can refer you to a private immigration attorney. In San Francisco, you can call the Bar Association of San Francisco and their number is 415-989-1616.