

Definitions

Asylum: The protection that countries grant to refugees.¹

Asylum-seeker: An asylum-seeker is a person who has fled persecution in their home country and is seeking safe haven in a different country, but has not yet received any legal recognition or status.²

Chain Migration: A policy called “family-based immigration” by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Under the terms of the USCIS program, U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents (LPRs, aka green card holders) can sponsor immigrant visas for certain family members. These fall into two categories: Immediate relative (or “family reunification”) visas, available to applicants having a “close family relationship” with a U.S. citizen:

- Spouses
- Unmarried children under 21
- Orphans adopted abroad or to be adopted in the U.S.
- Parents (if citizen is 21 or older)

Family preference visas, available to applicants with “specific, more distant, family relationships with a U.S. citizen and some specified relationships with a lawful permanent resident”:

- Unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. citizens and their minor children, if any
- Spouses, minor children, and unmarried sons and daughters 21 or older of LPRs
- Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens and their spouses and minor children
- Siblings of U.S. citizens and their spouses and minor children (if citizens are 21 or older)¹³

Economic Migrant: A person who leaves their home country to live in another country with better working or living conditions ¹²

First generation immigrant: First-generation can refer to an immigrant, a foreign-born resident, who has relocated and become a citizen or permanent resident in a new country. Or, also, first-generation could refer to a person who is the first in his or her family to be a naturally born citizen in a country of relocation. ³

Immigrant: Someone who has come to the United States voluntarily from another country. ⁴

Lawful permanent resident: A non-citizen who has been granted authorization to live and work in the United States on a permanent basis. As proof of that status, a person is granted a permanent resident card, commonly called a “green card.”⁵

Migrant: A person who moves from their home for any variety of reasons, but not necessarily because of a direct threat of persecution or death. Migrant is an umbrella category that can include refugees, but can also include people moving to improve their lives by finding work or education, those seeking family reunion and others.⁶

Naturalization ceremony: The last step in becoming a US citizen is to take the Oath of Allegiance at a formal naturalization ceremony. The ceremony serves as a venue to recognize the rights, responsibilities, and importance of citizenship and provide access to services for new citizens. ⁷



Out of Status: When a person loses their immigration status due to some sort of violation of the visa terms. Examples of conduct that can leave a person “out-of-status” include:
Working without the proper authorization
Failing to marry the petitioner if the visa is a fiancé-based visa
Failing to attend the appropriate school if under a student visa ¹⁵

Refugee: Someone who fled their home and country owing to “a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion”. The definition also includes people fleeing natural and man made disasters. Refugee is an assigned status by the government. ⁸

Refugee Resettlement: The transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another State that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement. ⁹

Special Immigrant Visa (SIV): A special immigrant is a person who qualifies for a green card (permanent residence) under the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) special immigrant program. This category of visa was created for people who worked with the U.S. government or contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan, at great risk to themselves. ¹⁴

Stateless Person: Stateless persons do not have a recognized nationality and do not belong to any country. Statelessness situations are usually caused by discrimination against certain groups. Their lack of identification — a citizenship certificate — can exclude them from access to important government services, including health care, education or employment. ⁸

Undocumented vs. Illegal:

No human being is illegal. Phrases like “illegal immigrant” and “illegal alien” replace complex legal circumstances with the assumption of guilt. They effectively criminalize the personhood of migrants, instead of describing the legality of their actions. ¹¹



Undocumented: There are a few ways that someone can become undocumented in the United States : 1) Someone entered the U.S. legally and their immigration status has since expired. 2) Someone entered the U.S. without inspection. 3) Someone submitted an immigration application or petition and was denied and continued to remain in the U.S. ¹²

1. <https://fairus.org/issue/glossary-immigration-terms>
2. https://www.hias.org/sites/default/files/some_helpful_definitions_-_for_hias_website.pdf
3. <https://www.thoughtco.com/first-generation-immigrant-defined-1951570>
4. <http://www.sayhellotochange.com/all-for-all/>
5. https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/lawful_permanent_resident_lpr
6. <http://www.unhcr.org/55df0e556.html>
7. <https://www.uscis.gov/policymanual/HTML/PolicyManual-Volume12-PartJ-Chapter5.html>
8. <http://www.un.org/en/events/refugeeday/background.shtml>
9. <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/resettlement.html>
10. <https://defineamerican.com/factsmatter/>
11. <https://world.utexas.edu/undocumented/resources/understanding>
12. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/economic-migrant>
13. <https://www.snopes.com/news/2018/02/01/what-is-chain-migration/>
14. <https://www.npr.org/2017/03/27/521537052/special-immigrant-visa-holders-still-face-questioning-upon-reaching-u-s>
15. <https://www.legalmatch.com/law-library/article/unlawful-presence-vs-out-of-status-laws.html>