BASIC IMMIGRATION GUIDE FOR REFUGEES
2013- ENGLISH
WHY WAS THIS IMMIGRATION GUIDE DEVELOPED?

Since 1970, more than 31,000 refugees from all over the world have fled persecution and violence to make Iowa their home. While resettlement provides an opportunity to rebuild their lives, it also brings many challenges. Navigating the immigration system can be one of the most complicated of challenges. However, it is also one of the most important to manage successfully, as the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service is an integral part of a refugees’ lives, from resettlement to citizenship.

This immigration resource guide was developed to help the refugee community better understand immigration laws and their rights and responsibilities as new immigrants. The immigration process can be complex and confusing. We hope this guide will provide a basic overview and understanding of the steps involved in the process of becoming citizens.

Sincerely,

Henny Ohr
Director
EMBARC (Ethnic Minorities of Burma Advocacy & Resource Center)
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If you would like to provide feedback about the guidebook, please contact Henny Ohr at embarc@embarciowa.org or 515-650-3339. We welcome all questions, comments, suggestions, and evaluation.

*Disclaimer*: The materials in this guide are provided for informational purposes only. The use of information contained in this guide does not constitute the offering of legal advice. Any reliance on the information contained in this guide is solely at the reader’s own risk. Immigration laws, forms, fees, regulations, procedures and policies are constantly changing, sometimes even retroactively and the information contained in this guide may not necessarily be complete or correct on the date of publication. Before making decisions or taking any actions affecting U.S. immigration status, please consult an immigration attorney or a BIA Accredited organization.
PATH TO CITIZENSHIP
If you have or receive criminal convictions, please consult an immigration attorney before taking further steps along the path.

Arrive in the U.S
- Welcome to the United States!
- Obtain your Social Security Card.
- Make copies of all your documents and keep them in a safe place.

8th Month
- Get all the immunizations required for your "green card" for free.
- Refugee Medical Assistance will end 9 months after your arrival. Without assistance you will have to pay for these shots.

1st Year
- Congratulations on your first year in the U.S!
- You must now register to become a permanent resident. (obtain your "green card")
- Home addresses from the last 5 years
- Date/place of your marriage (and divorce)
- Evidence of 1 year presence (if available)
- Passports (if available)

Documents and Information Needed
- I-94 card
- Two full frontal color passport photos
- Sealed I-693 envelope signed by a civil surgeon
- Social Security Number
- Name, date of birth, and "A# / USCIS number" for you and your family members.
- Employment information for the last 5 years.

5th Year
- Congratulations you can apply to become a U.S. citizen!
- A copy of both sides of your "green card" changed your name. (example: marriage certificate)
- If previously married, copies of divorce decrees, or death certificates.

Documents and Information Needed
- A copy of both sides of your "green card"
- 2 identical "passport" photos
- A check or money order for the application fee of $595, plus fingerprint fee of $85, totaling $680.00, OR fee waiver form.
- If your name is different than what appears on your "green card," copies of document that

Fees listed as of November 2012. For updated fees, check www.uscis.gov/form
STEPS TO BECOMING A PERMANENT RESIDENT

What Should I Do After I Settle in the U.S.?

- Please make a copy of personal, medical and immigration documents for every member of your family. Keep the originals in a safe place separate from your copies.

What Kind of Medical Evaluation Do I Need to Apply for My “Green Card”?  

- Refugees only need their immunizations updated and reviewed. Unlike immigrants, most refugees do not need a full medical exam. Medical evaluation requirements to apply for a “green card” are different for refugees and immigrants.
- The nurse/doctor will complete or update only the vaccination portion of USCIS Form I-693: Report of Medical Examination and Vaccination Record.
- Immunization requirements will also vary according to age and gender.

When Should I Get My Required Immunizations?

- **Within the first 9 months.** Refugee Medical Assistance ends 9 months after your arrival. Without this assistance, adults will have to pay for vaccination costs.
- Go to your primary clinic/doctor, or local public health agency, with all your vaccination and medical records. Prices for vaccinations will vary, so please research to find the lowest cost option.
- If you do not have proof of earlier vaccinations, you will need to have them administered again.

Can any health provider sign USCIS Form I-693?

- No, form I-693 must be signed by a USCIS designated civil surgeon or health department with civil surgeon designation (ex. Polk County Health Department), after all the vaccinations have been obtained and recorded on Form I-693.
- To find a civil surgeon near you, call the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283 or go to www.uscis.gov/civilsurgeons.
- The cost of a civil surgeon’s services will vary. Local public health agencies, like Polk County Health Department, will only charge a small fee, while others may charge many hundreds of dollars.

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\(^2\)For refugees who arrived to the U.S. with a “Class A condition” the entire medical exam on form I-693 is required.

\(^3\)Adults without children cannot enroll in Medicaid. Only Iowa Cares is available, which does not cover costs of vaccinations.
What Should I Do After the Civil Surgeon Signs the Form?

- After the civil surgeon signs Form I-693, they will give you a sealed envelope.
- Do not open this envelope. USCIS will not accept an envelope that has been opened.
- This completed form expires in one year! Keep the envelope in a safe place.

When Should I Apply for My “Green Card”?

- You should apply for your “green card” one year after your arrival.
- You must apply obtain permanent residency before applying for citizenship.

What Information Should I Collect for the “Green Card” Application?

- Social Security Number.
- Name, date of birth, and “A#/USCIS number” for you and your family members.
- Employment information for the last 5 years.
- Home addresses from the last 5 years.
- Date/place of your marriage (and divorce).
- Certified copy of arrest record and/or disposition, if you were ever arrested or detained by any law enforcement officer for any reason.

What Documents Do I Need to Gather for the “Green Card” application?

- I-94 card (required).
- TWO full frontal color passport photos (required).
- Sealed I-693 envelope signed by a civil surgeon (required).
- Evidence of 1 year presence (if available).
- Passports (if available).
- Birth Certificate (if available).
What Forms Do I Need to Complete to Apply for My “Green Card”?

- **Form I-485** - Every member of the family needs to complete form I-485. Individuals 14 and older must sign their own application. However, parents can sign applications for children ages 13 years old and younger. It is free for refugees to apply for their green card.
- **Form G-325A** - Individuals 14 and older must complete and sign a G-325A. These forms are not necessary for children 13 and younger.
- **Form AR-11** - If you and your family have changed addresses since arriving, you need to complete this form for every member of the family.

What Should I Do After I Complete My Application?

- Make copies of all the forms and evidence you will send to USCIS.
- Mail all the forms certified mail and return receipt.
- Go to your biometrics (fingerprint) appointment.
- Be sure to let USCIS know if you change your address by filing form AR-11.

- **By Mail**: You will need to mail two separate AR-11s. One to the main CIS change-of-address office, and one to the service center processing your I-485.
- **Online**: The easiest way to change your address with all required CIS offices is to go to https://egov.uscis.gov/crisgwi/go?search=coa and follow the instructions.
What Do I Do After I Receive My Green Card?

- Congratulations, you are now a legal permanent resident! Please make a copy of your card and keep this in a safe place.
- Your “green card” is valid for 10 years and must be renewed before it expires.
- Review “Steps to becoming a Citizen” in this guidebook.

How Can I Maintain My Permanent Residence Status?

- Do not travel abroad for longer than 6 months.
- File your taxes every year you earn income.
- Obey all federal, state and local laws.  
- If you are a male between 18-26 yrs of age, register for selective service.
- Every time you move, you must inform USCIS by filing form AR-11.
- Carry a copy of your “green card” at all times.

*If convicted of certain crimes, permanent residents can be deported from the U.S.*
ARE YOU ELIGIBLE TO FOR U.S. CITIZENSHIP?  

If your response asks you to “stop,” this does not mean you are ineligible to apply for citizenship. The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine whether you need to speak with an attorney or Board of immigration Appeals (BIA) representative before continuing with the naturalization application.

1. Are you at least 18 years old?
   a. Yes
   b. No **STOP**

2. Do you have a green card?
   a. Yes
   b. No **STOP**

3. Have you been in the country for at least 5 years?
   a. Yes
   b. No **STOP**

4. Have you been living in the same state for the past 3 months?
   a. Yes
   b. No **STOP**

5. Can you read, write, and speak basic English?
   a. Yes
   b. No **STOP**

6. For MALES ONLY who are or were between 18-26 years of age in the U.S:
   Have you registered with selective service?
   a. Yes
   b. No **STOP**

7. Have you ever deserted from the U.S. Military?
   a. Yes **STOP**
   b. No

8. Are you willing to support the U.S. Constitution?
   a. Yes
   b. No **STOP**

9. Are you willing to take an oath of allegiance to the U.S?
   a. Yes
   b. No **STOP**

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*Eligibility questions will differ depending on immigration status. This questionnaire is only for individuals who came as refugees.*
10. Did you file taxes every year you earned income?
   a. Yes
   b. No

11. Have you been out of the country for longer than 30 months in the past 5 years?
   a. Yes
   b. No

12. Have you taken a trip outside of the US for longer than 6 months?
   a. Yes
   b. No

13. Have you ever lied to get immigration benefits for either yourself or someone else?
   a. Yes
   b. No

14. Have you ever lied about being a U.S. Citizen?
   a. Yes
   b. No

15. Have you ever been married to more than one person at a time?
   a. Yes
   b. No

16. Have you ever been involved in a crime, arrested, or indicted?
   a. Yes
   b. No

17. Have you ever failed to financially support your dependents?
   a. Yes
   b. No

18. Have you ever lied to get public benefits such as food stamps or SSI?
   a. Yes
   b. No

19. Have you ever helped someone enter the U.S. illegally?
   a. Yes
   b. No
STEPS TO BECOMING A UNITED STATES CITIZEN

What are the Requirements to Become a Naturalized U.S. Citizen?6

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be a lawful permanent resident for five years.
- Have made the U.S. your continuous residence for five years.
- Have been in the U.S. for at least half of the five years before applying for citizenship.
- Pass a test on speaking, understanding, reading and writing basic English.
- Have “good moral character.”
- Have no citizenship-related legal problems.

How Do I Apply for Citizenship?

The Process of Becoming a U.S. Citizen is Called “Naturalization”

- Complete Form N-400, Application for Naturalization.
- As of September 2012, the application fee is $595.00 and the biometrics (fingerprinting) fee is $85.00. Total: $680.00 by check or money order.
- Fees are not refundable, even if you withdraw your application or it is denied.
- Fee waivers are available for this form. Form I-912 needs to be completed and submitted with evidence of your inability to pay. (for more information on fee waivers, go to page 14)
- It is strongly advised that you seek the assistance of a qualified immigration attorney or BIA representative for any immigration matter.

6Complete the questionnaire for citizenship for more details on eligibility.
What are the Benefits of Becoming a Citizen?

You can:

- Vote in local, state, and national elections.
- Apply for family members to join you in the United States.
- Give citizenship status to your children.
- Obtain a United States Passport and leave the U.S. for more than 6 months at a time.
- Access to certain public benefits such as SSI without time limits.
- Never be deported from the United States.

What Documents Do I Need To Complete This Form?\(^7\)

Required Documents:

- A copy of both sides of your “green card”
- 2 identical full frontal color “passport” photos
- A check or money order for the application fee of $595, plus fingerprint fee of $85, totaling $680.00, OR fee waiver form.
- Fees should be made out to: “U.S. Department of Homeland Security.” Write your A#/USCIS number on the front of the check/money order.

Other documents, if applicable:

- If your name is different than what appears on your “green card,” copies of document that legally changed your name. (example: marriage certificate)
- If previously married, copies of divorce decrees, or death certificates.
- If arrested for any reason, a certified copy of the arrest record and/or disposition.
- If you have a dependent spouse or children who do not live with you, copies of documents that you are providing financial support
- If you have ever failed to file taxes or have overdue taxes, copies of any correspondence with IRS, proof of payment plan, or any payments made to the IRS.

What Happens After I Submit My Application?

- Within 1 month, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services will send you a letter confirming that they received your application.
- Within 2-3 months, you should receive a notice to appear for biometrics (fingerprints) and photographs.
- Within 8-10 months, you will receive a notice for an interview with a USCIS officer.

How do I Prepare for the Interview?

Preparing for the interview is as important as studying for the tests.

- The officer will ask you questions about your entire application. Anything on the form, including the questions and terms can be tested. Pay special attention to the “yes/no” questions.
- For example, a USCIS officer may ask you to define “communism.” If you do not give an adequate response, the officer can deny your application.

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\(^7\)This is not a complete list. It may be necessary to submit other documents; it depends on your circumstances.
Remember that the English portion of your test begins with the interview as the officer swears you in.

Bring copies of your N-400 application, evidence submitted with your application, a valid government issued photo identification, tax return for the past 5 years, and any additional documents requested by USCIS.

What Is the English Test Requirement?
Citizenship applicants are required to pass a test on speaking, understanding reading and writing basic English.

- **Listening and Speaking**
  Tests your ability to answer questions about your citizenship application and how well you follow directions during the interview.

- **Reading**
  Tests your ability to read at least one sentence using the vocabulary words found on the USCIS list of “Reading Vocabulary for the Naturalization Test.”

- **Writing**
  Tests your ability to write at least one spoken sentence using the vocabulary words found on the USCIS “Writing Vocabulary for the Naturalization Test.”

What Are The History And Government Test (Civics) Requirements?

- You will be given ten questions (six of which you must answer correctly), out of a list of 100.
- Questions are based on United States history and our style of government.

Are There Any Exemptions or Waivers to the English and/or Civics Test?

- Depending on your age and length of time you have lived in the U.S., you may be exempt from the English and/or Civics Test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IF YOU ARE</th>
<th>LIVED AS PERMANENT RESIDENT IN U.S. FOR</th>
<th>YOU DO NOT TAKE THE</th>
<th>YOU MUST TAKE THE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 50 or older</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>English test</td>
<td>Civics test in your language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 55 or older</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>English test</td>
<td>Civics test in your language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 65 or older</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>English test</td>
<td>Simplified Civics test in your language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you have a disability that prevents you from learning or remembering the required information, you may be able to get a waiver from the English and/or civic tests. USCIS must approve a Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions (Form N-648).

Are There Any Resources to Help Me Prepare to Apply for Citizenship?

**USCIS Office of Citizenship**
Provides immigrants with resources and tools to prepare immigrants for citizenship.
Website: [www.uscis.gov/citizenship](http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship)
Phone: (202) 272-1280
Email: citizenshipgrantprogram@dhs.gov

**CitizenshipWorks**
CitizenshipWorks provides easy-to-use online tools to help low and moderate-income individuals to answer important questions about their eligibility for naturalization, to better understand the naturalization process, and to prepare for the naturalization tests.
Website: [www.citizenshipworks.org](http://www.citizenshipworks.org)
CAN MY FAMILY MEMBERS WHO LIVE ABROAD BECOME U.S. PERMANENT RESIDENTS?

Only certain family members are eligible to become legal permanent residents (LPR). It depends on the immigrant status of the petitioner and their relationship to the beneficiary and other factors, such as age and marital status.

Sponsor vs. Petitioner

Although the term commonly used to describe a U.S. citizen or resident who helps someone immigrate is “sponsor,” this isn’t the technical term. You “petition” for your family member, so you’re a “petitioner.” Your incoming family member is called a “beneficiary.”

How Can I Help My Family Obtain Legal Permanent Resident Status?

If You are a Refugee or Asylee:

If you are a refugee or asylee in the United States and want your spouse and unmarried minor (under 21) children who are abroad to join you, you may file Form I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition. Refugees must file within two years of their arrival to the United States and asylees, two years after being granted asylum.

You may also be eligible to file an Affidavit of Relationship for your spouse, child (unmarried, under 21), or parents. The Affidavit of Relationship is the form used to reunite refugees and asylees with close relatives who are determined to be refugees but are outside the United States. For information on the current nationalities eligible to file, see the “U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees & Migration”.

If family members are approved to come to the U.S., they can apply for their “green card” one year after their arrival.

If You are a Legal Permanent Resident:

You can only petition for your spouse and unmarried children to become LPRs.

If You are a Citizen:

You can only petition for your spouse, children (married or unmarried), parents, and siblings to become LPRs.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are a legal permanent resident or U.S. Citizen, you will have to show that you can financially support your relative, or that you have another financial sponsor who will be willing to show that he or she can financially support your relative. You do not need to prove ability to financially support your relative if you are applying through the I-730 or Affidavit of Relationship processes.
How Long Must Relatives Wait To Become Permanent Residents?
The length of time before family members can apply to become U.S. permanent residents depends on whether they are considered “immediate relatives” or “preference category relatives.”

Immediate Relatives:
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens always have a visa number immediately available and can apply for their LPRs immediately. An unlimited number of applicants can immigrate each year under this category, as they are not subject to yearly limits.
Immediate relatives include:
- Spouses of U.S. Citizens
- Unmarried minor (under 21 years) children of U.S. Citizens
- Parents of Adult U.S. citizens

Preference Category Relatives
If your relationship does not qualify you as an immediate relative of a U.S. citizen, then you may fall under one of four categories ranked in order of preference. Congress limits the number of immigrant visas and only a certain percentage of the green cards go to any one country each year. So there is often a long waiting period before an immigrant visa number becomes available. The waiting period can be anywhere from a few years to decades.

Preference Category Relatives include:
Preference One (1st)
- Unmarried sons or daughters (21 or older) of US citizens.

Preference Two (2nd)
- Spouses and children (under 21) of lawful permanent residents.
- Unmarried sons and daughters (21 or older) of lawful permanent residents.

Preference Three (3rd)
- Married sons or daughters of U.S. citizens and their unmarried children under 21.

Preference Four (4th)
- Brothers or sisters of US citizens provided that the citizen is 21 or older and their unmarried children are under 21.
How Do I Start The Application Process For My Family Member?

There are two parts to the application process for permanent residence through a relative.

**FIRST:** The U.S. citizen or green card holder must file Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative, to establish their relationship with the beneficiaries. Once this petition is approved, beneficiaries who are preference category relatives must wait until their priority date in their immigrant visa category becomes current before applying for their “green card.” Beneficiaries cannot legally enter the U.S. as legal permanent residents until both the petition and green card application has been approved.

**SECOND:** Once the priority date in the beneficiaries’ visa category is current, they may apply for their “green card.” If you relative is outside the U.S., you will be contacted by the National Visa Center, an office of the U.S. Department of State, and asked to submit additional forms and information. Once you have submitted the information requested, your relative will be then be sent a notice to appear for an interview at the closest American Consulate that processes immigrant visa petitions.

If you relative happens to already be in the United States, is an immediate relative (not a preference category relative) and entered the United States legally, he or she may be eligible to file Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status, and obtain their residency from within the U.S.

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10Your priority date is the date when the Form I-130 is properly filed on your behalf by the U.S. permanent resident or citizen relative. The Department of State publishes the Visa Bulletin each month at www.travel.state.gov.
WHERE CAN I FIND HELP WITH USCIS FORMS AND LEGAL IMMIGRATION ADVICE?

Many people offer help with immigration services. Unfortunately, not all are authorized to do so. Some people may be deliberately trying to scam you. Others, though having the best of intentions, may end up causing serious harm, because they do not have the proper knowledge and experience. Beware of “Notarios,” immigration consultants and businesses who advertise themselves to be specialists in immigration legal services. They cannot give you immigration legal advice.

Only attorneys or BIA accredited representatives can legally:

- Give you legal advice about which forms to submit
- Explain immigration options you may have
- Communicate with USCIS about your case

Going to the unauthorized provider can:

- Delay your application or petition
- Cost you unnecessary fees
- Possibly lead to removal proceedings

BIA Accredited Representatives of Recognized BIA Organizations

A BIA accredited representative is only accredited while working for a BIA recognized organization. To be recognized by the BIA, the organization must have adequate knowledge and experience to provide immigration services, and that it charges or accepts only nominal fees for those services.

To find a BIA organization, please visit:

To find an accredited representatives on the BIA roster, please visit:
Immigration Attorneys

Attorneys must be licensed to practice law, and most will charge fees for their service. The quality of services and the costs will vary, so choose your attorney carefully. Your local bar association may be helpful in finding a qualified lawyer. You may also find lawyers who specialize in immigration through http://www.ailalawyer.com/.

Unauthorized Practice of Law

Almost anything more than filling in the blanks on an immigration form is considered unauthorized practice of law.

This includes:
- Recommending which form a client needs
- Explaining what something on a form “means”
- Recommending how to fill out a certain form or part of a form
- Telling clients what immigration legal remedies they might be eligible for

Consequences of unauthorized practice of law:
- States can sue someone practicing law without a license.
- Individuals and agencies can be held liable for mistakes and sued by the client.
- Clients can suffer irreversible harm, such as deportation.
- Clients’ applications can be delayed, or clients may have had to pay unnecessary fees.

Free or Low Cost Legal Services Providers

**Iowa Immigrant Voice Program:**

- **Legal Services**
  - American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
  - Legal Services Director
  - 4211 Grand Avenue
  - Des Moines, IA 50312
  - Phone: (515) 274-4851, ext. 13
  - Email: jmashek@afsc.org
  - Please call to make an appointment.

**Iowa Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON)**

- Gary Walters, Esq.
- Brynne Howard, Esq.
- P.O. Box 41006
- Des Moines, Iowa 50311
- Phone: 515-255-9809
- Emails: easterniowa_jfon@yahoo.com
  - westerniowajfon@gmail.com
  - Please call to make an appointment.

For a listing of other free or low cost Immigration service providers in Iowa, as well as private attorneys, please visit the “Iowa Immigration Lawyers List” at AFSC: https://afsc.org/office/des-moines-ia.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What Should I Do if I Move to a Different Address?
You must notify USCIS of your new address every time you move by completing form AR-11, until you obtain citizenship status. You can submit the form by mail or online at https://egov.uscis.gov/crisgwi/go?action=coa

However, if you have an application pending, you must mail the form to two separate addresses: 1) the USCIS center processing your application and 2) the address on the AR-11.

Failure to notify USCIS of your current address will result in missed notices from USCIS. This is because the US Postal Service will NOT forward mail from USCIS to a new address. This could result in the denial of an application, loss of application fees, and other serious consequences.

When Should I Replace My Green Card?
You will have to replace your green card by completing Form I-90 when:
- Your green card is lost or stolen.
- After you turn 14.
- Before the expiration date on the card.
- If the information on your card is incorrect.

What if I can’t pay the USCIS fees?
Fee waivers are available for certain forms and services based on a demonstrated inability to pay. To be eligible for a fee waiver, one of the following must be met:
- You or qualified members of your household are receiving a means-tested benefit such as food stamps, Medicare, SSI or TANF. You must provide evidence that shows the name of the granting agency, and the name of the recipient.
- Your household is at or below the 150% poverty level at the time you file. You will have to provide evidence of your household size and provide a copy of your most recent federal tax return or recent paystubs. The federal poverty guidelines change every year; Check the 2012 poverty levels on this form: Form I-912P, HHS Poverty Guidelines for Fee Waiver Requests.
You are experiencing a financial hardship that prevents you from paying the filing fee, such as recent unemployment, unexpected medical bills or emergencies that you think USCIS should consider. Detailed information about assets and expenses and a statement describing the hardship needs to be included.

Read the instructions for Form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver, to see if a fee waiver is available for the form you are filing.

File the fee waiver request (Form I-912) with the form for which you are requesting the fee waiver. Do not send a fee waiver request by itself.

Can I Travel outside the United States?
Yes, you can travel outside the U.S., but remember the following:

- Do not travel outside of the United States for longer than six months until you get your citizenship.
- Do not go back to your “home” country, the country that you or your family left for fear of persecution. If you go back, you may lose your refugee status and may not be allowed to reenter the U.S.
- Depending on where you are traveling to and the length of your trip you will need to apply for either a 1) Refugee Travel Document or a 2) Reentry Permit. Please check with the embassy of the country you wish to travel to, regarding which document they will accept. Immigration documents that may be sufficient for the U.S. government for travel purposes may not be acceptable to the country you plan on traveling to.

What Documents Do I Need to Prove I am Eligible to Work in the U.S.?

- If you entered the United States with refugee status, then you are authorized to work.
- As a refugee, the I-94 travel document will state that you are authorized to work.
- Unfortunately, many employers do not understand the rules about work authorization, and may refuse to offer work to refugees because they do not have a “green card” (legal permanent resident status) or “Employment Authorization Document” (EAD).

The law (Chapter 8, Code of Federal Regulations § 274a.2.) states that as a refugee, your I-94 is sufficient proof of your authorization to work. However, within 90 days of your hire date, you may also need to also provide a social security card (that contains no employment restrictions) and another document to establish your identity (such as a state ID card or drivers license.)

If your employer has questions, you can show them this document, ask them to review the law, or call the Office of Special Counsel at the Department of Labor for employers at 1-800-255-8155.
What Is Selective Service?
Selective Service is a system by which all men ages 18 through 25 register with the U.S. government, so that they may be called up for military service in the event of a national crisis or emergency. All males between 18 and 25 must register for Selective Service. You can register online at: www.sss.gov or mail in selective service forms you can find at your local post office.

Where Can I Get Help With Filing My Taxes?
You can get your taxes prepared for free at VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) sites. Call 2-1-1 to find a VITA location close to you. If you earn income, it is important to file taxes every year, as compliance with tax laws are required if you ever apply for Citizenship.

Beware of predatory tax preparers who charge money with a promise that they can get you a larger refund than other tax preparers. Predatory tax preparers commit fraud by improperly claiming tax credits. One of the most common tax problems is when people claim children or relatives as dependents who they don’t have the right to claim. Beware of tax preparers who tell you that you can claim other people’s children when they have not lived in your house and/or you have not financially supported them. The rules are complicated, and there are many exceptions to the general rules. If you have questions, seek out the advice of a trusted professional.
WHAT SHOULD I DO IF STOPPED BY THE POLICE?¹

The police are here to protect you, your family and the public from harm. Don’t be afraid to report a crime, especially if you are the victim. Some criminals take advantage of immigrants because they think you will not report the crime to the police. This card provides tips for interacting with the police and understanding your rights.

Your Rights

- You have the right to remain silent. You do not have to answer questions.
- You can refuse to have your possessions, your self, your car or your home searched.
- You have the right to leave, if you are not under arrest.
- You have the right to a lawyer if you are under arrest. Ask for a lawyer right away.
- Stay calm and be polite.
- Do not interfere.
- Do not lie or give false documents.
- Remember the details of your encounter with police.

Your Responsibilities

- Slow down and pull over to the right side if the road immediately.
- Turn off the car, turn on the overhead light, open the window half way, and place your hands where the officer can see them, such as the steering wheel.
- If the officer asks, show your license, registration and proof of insurance.
- You can refuse to have your car searched.
- You do not have to let the police into your home unless they have a warrant.
- Ask the officer to slip the warrant under the door, or hold it up to the window, so you can review it.
- A warrant allows officers to search and take only the types of things listed on it.
- Do not resist, even if you feel the arrest is unfair.
- Say you wish to remain silent, and ask for a lawyer immediately.
- You have the right to one phone call.
- Do not challenge the officer in public, physically resist officers, or threaten to file a complaint.
- Write down everything you remember, such as officer badge number, car license plates, or which agency officers are from.
- Ask witnesses for contact information, take pictures of any injuries, and other details.
- File a complaint with the police department and call the and the ACLU at 515-243-3576.

If You are Stopped in Your Car

If the Police Come to Your Home

If You are Arrested

If you Believe your Rights Have Been Violated

¹Adapted from the ACLU’s “Know Your Rights: What To Do if You’re Stopped by Police, Immigration Agents or the FBI” resource, found here: http://www.aclu.org/drug-law-reform-immigrants-rights-racial-justice/know-your-rights-what-do-if-you
IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICE (USCIS)

**Contacting USCIS**

**National Customer Service Center**

For questions about immigration services and to check on the status of your case, call the National Customer Service Center.

Call: 1-800-375-5283

**INFOPASS**

To schedule appointments with an immigration officer at your local USCIS office, use INFOPASS, a free scheduling system available online.

Visit: www.infopass.uscis.gov

**Mailing Applications To USCIS**

Some USCIS forms can be submitted online. For forms that need to be mailed by postal service, remember to send it both:

1. Certified Mail
2. Return Receipt.

The return receipt card will be mailed back to you with the signature of the person who received the mail. This serves as proof that the document was received.

**Checking On The Status Of Your Application**

To check the status of your case online, you will need your receipt number. This can be found on the notices you receive from USCIS after your application has been received.

2. Look for: “CASE STATUS” on the upper left hand corner of the page.
3. Enter your “receipt number”

Note: You can also receive automatic updates about your case. On the USCIS website, under “Services” click “Sign up for case updates”