

# PATHWAYS TO CITIZENSHIP

## RESOURCE GUIDE FOR UNDOC STUDENTS



### UNDERSTANDING YOUR OPTIONS

Pathways to citizenship vary based on individual circumstances—age, family ties, work history, and legal status all play a role. You may qualify through family-based petitions, employment, asylum, or DACA. Each pathway has different processes and timelines, so it's crucial to reflect on your situation to find the best option for you.

Utilize campus resources for personalized guidance tailored to your needs. Engaging with professionals can help clarify your options and empower you to make informed decisions about your future. Remember, your journey toward citizenship is in your hands—take action today!

### WHO IS UNDOCUMENTED?

“Undocumented” is broadly defined to include all immigrants who reside in the United States without legal status.

This includes those who are either:

- Entered the US without inspection or with fraudulent documents;
- Entered legally as a nonimmigrant but then violated terms of their status and remained in the US without authorization;
- Have Deferred Action Childhood Arrival (“DACA”) status or has previously had DACA;
- Are otherwise currently in the process of legalizing; or
- Have an immigration status that is in ‘limbo’ or puts them ‘at-risk’ for being targeted by immigration enforcement.

## PATHWAYS TO CITIZENSHIP

### RESOURCES

#### MORE ON ELIGIBILITY:

A <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/permanent-workers>



#### GENERAL OVERVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT VISAS:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment.html>



#### LABOR CERTIFICATION PROCESS (PERM):

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/fo-reign-labor/programs/permanent>



#### H-1B CAP SEASON INFORMATION:

[City of Seattle’s legal, mental health, & DACA resources](https://www.seattle.gov/iandraftaffairs/issues-and-policies/daca)  
<https://www.seattle.gov/iandraftaffairs/issues-and-policies/daca>

#### FORMS:

I-140: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-140>  
H-1B: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-129>

### EMPLOYMENT-BASED IMMIGRATION

**Eligibility: If you have a job offer from an employer willing to sponsor you.**

#### Steps:

- Explore work visa options (e.g., H-1B).
- Secure a job offer and employer sponsorship.
- Transition to a green card (Form I-140).

#### Duration:

- H-1B Processing: 3-6 months (premium processing available).
- Adjustment of Status: 8-14 months after filing I-485.

#### Costs:

- H-1B Filing Fee: Approximately \$460 plus additional fees based on employer size.
- I-140 Filing Fee: \$700.

#### Notes:

- H-1B petitions typically have an annual filing window (April 1st for an October start date).
- Employers must show a labor shortage to sponsor an H-1B.

### FAMILY-BASED IMMIGRATION

**Eligibility: You can apply if you have a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident family member.**

#### Steps:

- Identify eligible relatives (spouse, child, parent, sibling).
- File petitions:
  - Form I-130: Petition for Alien Relatives.
  - Form I-485: Application to Adjust Status.

#### Duration:

- I-130: 6 months to several years.
- I-485: 8-14 months.

#### Costs:

- I-130 Filing Fee: \$535.
- I-485 Filing Fee: \$1,140 (additional biometrics fee may apply).

#### Notes:

- No specific annual deadlines. Submit applications as soon as eligible.
- Consult an immigration attorney for guidance.

### RESOURCES

#### MORE ON ELIGIBILITY:

<https://www.uscis.gov/family>



#### NATIONAL VISA CENTER PROCESSING (FOR CONSULAR PROCESSING):

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/nvc.html>



#### VISA BULLETIN FOR CURRENT PROCESSING TIMES:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/fo-reign-labor/programs/permanent>



#### FORMS:

I-130: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-130>

I-485: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-485>

### RESOURCES

#### MORE ON ELIGIBILITY:

<https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors>



#### OVERVIEW OF F-1 AND M-1 VISAS:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment.html>



#### APPLYING FOR OPT (OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING):

<https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/optional-practical-training-opt-for-f-1-students>



#### FORMS:

I-20: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

More SEVIS info: <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/overview>

### STUDENT VISA PATHWAYS

**Eligibility: Options to switch to F-1 or other student visas.**

#### Steps:

- Check eligibility for student visas.
- Gather documents (proof of admission, financial support).
- Prepare for consulate interviews if applying from outside the U.S.

#### Duration:

- F-1 visa applications can take weeks to months.

#### Costs:

- Form I-20 Fee: Generally no fee; SEVIS Fee: \$350.

#### Notes:

- Apply well in advance of program start dates.
- Maintain full-time enrollment to stay in status.

## RESOURCES

### MORE ON ELIGIBILITY:

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-of-criminal-activity-u-nonimmigrant-status>



### RESOURCES FOR U VISA APPLICANTS:

<https://www.ilrc.org/u-visa-immigration-status>



### VICTIM OF CRIME SUPPORT AND CERTIFICATION INFO:

<https://ovc.ojp.gov/>



### FORMS

I-918: <https://www.uscis.gov/I-918>

## MILITARY SERVICE

Eligibility: Potential opportunities through military service (note: MAVNI program currently suspended).

### Steps:

- Research branches that may accept undocumented immigrants.
- Understand enlistment requirements.

Duration: Varies by branch (typically 2-6 years).

Costs: No application fee; potential processing costs.

### Notes:

- Stay informed on policies, as they can change.

## RESOURCES

### MORE ON ELIGIBILITY:

<https://www.uscis.gov/military/naturalization-through-military-service>



### MAVNI PROGRAM DETAILS (ARCHIVED FOR REFERENCE):

<https://dod.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/865233/>



### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IMMIGRATION POLICIES:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/foreign-labor/programs/permanent>



### MILITARY PATHWAY TO CITIZENSHIP OVERVIEW:

<https://www.military.com/join-armed-forces/citizenship-through-service.html>

## DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)

Eligibility: Check if you meet the criteria (age, residency, education).

### Steps:

- Gather required documents (proof of arrival before age 16).
- Submit Form I-821D for DACA.

Duration: Approvals can take 2-6 months.

### Costs:

- Application Fee: \$495 (biometrics fee may apply).

### Notes:

- Renew every two years, ideally 150 days before expiration.
- DACA does not lead to permanent residency or citizenship.

## RESOURCES

### MORE ON ELIGIBILITY:

<https://www.uscis.gov/DACA>



### IMMIGRANT LEGAL RESOURCE CENTER (DACA RESOURCES):

<https://www.ilrc.org/daca>



### FORMS:

I-821D: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-821d>



## SPECIAL IMMIGRANT JUVENILE STATUS (SIJS)

Eligibility: For undocumented youth who have experienced abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

### Steps:

- Obtain court findings (protection order, custody).
- File Form I-360 for SIJS.
- Apply for adjustment of status (Form I-485).

### Duration:

- SIJS petitions: several months.
- Adjustment: 8-14 months.

### Costs:

- Form I-360 Filing Fee: \$435.
- Form I-485 Filing Fee: \$1,140.

### Notes:

- File as soon as eligible; documentation from family court is critical.

## RESOURCES

### MORE ON ELIGIBILITY:

<https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-US/eb4/SIJ>



### FAMILY COURT INFORMATION FOR SIJS:

<https://www.lawhelpny.org/resource/special-immigrant-juvenile-status-sijs>



### SIJS RESOURCES FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE:

<https://www.ilrc.org/special-immigrant-juvenile-status>



### FORMS:

I-360: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-360>  
Form I-485: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-485>

## RESOURCES

### MORE ON ELIGIBILITY:

<https://www.uscis.gov/family/family-of-refugees-and-asylees>



### ASYLUM PROCESS OVERVIEW AND RESOURCES:

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/asylum>



### LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS:

<https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/search>

### FORMS

I-589: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-589>



## ASYLUM

Eligibility: For individuals fearing persecution in their home country.

### Steps:

- File Form I-589 within one year of arrival in the U.S.
- Prepare for an interview or hearing.

Duration: 6 months to several years, depending on the case.

Costs: No application fee for Form I-589.

Notes: Must file within one year unless exceptions apply; legal help is recommended.

## NEXT STEPS

Now that you've explored the various pathways to citizenship available to you, it's time to take proactive steps based on your pathway of interest. Schedule a meeting with a legal advisor or connect with campus resources to receive personalized guidance tailored to your unique situation. Engaging with professionals can help clarify your options and empower you to make informed decisions about your future. Remember, your journey toward citizenship is in your hands—take action today!

### 1. EXPLORE YOUR PATHWAY TO CITIZENSHIP

- Identify the pathway that suits your situation (e.g., family-based immigration, DACA).

### 2. SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH LEGAL ADVISORS

- Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP): (206) 957-8611
- Seattle University School of Law – Immigration Law Clinic: (206) 398-4000
- OneAmerica: (206) 402-1990

### 3. UTILIZE LEGAL AID RESOURCES

- ACLU of Washington: (206) 624-2184
- King County Bar Association (KCBA) Legal Clinics: (206) 267-7010
- Northwest Justice Project: (206) 464-1519
- El Centro de la Raza: (206) 957-4600
- Community Justice Project: (206) 965-3560
- The Legal Aid Society of Seattle: (206) 447-8281

### 4. CONNECT WITH CAMPUS RESOURCES

- MOSAIC Center: (206) 296-6070 | Email: [mosaic@seattleu.edu](mailto:mosaic@seattleu.edu)
- Health and Wellness Center: (206) 296-6060
- Office of Multicultural Affairs: (206) 220-8515

### 5. SEEK FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- Mariposa Emergency Fund: [Emergency Fund Request Form](#)
- Scholarship Resources:
- MALDEF - <https://www.maldef.org/>
- Washington Student Achievement Council - <https://wsac.wa.gov/>
- Immigrants Rising - <https://immigrantsrising.org/>
- United States Hispanic Leadership Institut - <https://www.uskli.org/scholarship-database/>

### 6. ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- Washington State Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (WSIRA): (206) 568-5455
- Seattle Community Law Center: (206) 322-5272
- Puget Sound Welcome Back Center: (206) 388-1950