

IMMIGRATION RESOURCE SHEET 2018

VISAS

The first step in moving to and working in the United States is to obtain a visa. There are five main categories of visas: travel/visiting, family, employment, school, and other. Each category has very specific rules and time limits so be sure to study the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) [website](#).

A note about fees: most forms will require a fee. Some are as inexpensive as \$60 and some can cost closer to \$1000. For certain visa or green card pathways, there may be multiple forms involved. More information regarding fees can be found on the USCIS [website](#).

Unless you come from a country listed under the [Visa Waiver Program](#), you will need a **Travel Visa** to the United States. Traveling must be for short term visits to qualify for a this type of visa. Visiting family, taking a weekend course, and medical care fall into this category. For more information on what is included in a travel visa and how to apply for one, visit the U.S. Department of State's [website](#).

Obtaining a **Family-based Visa** depends on which family members are already citizens or residing in the United States. Family members typically include spouses, children, siblings and parents. There are three ways to come to the United States through a Family Visa. First, [U.S. Citizens can apply for their family members](#), [U.S. Permanent Residents \(Green Card Holders\) can apply for certain family members](#), and [U.S. Citizens can bring their foreign fiancés](#). Most of these visas have short time limits. Their purpose is to get family members into the country just long enough to apply for a green card.

Employment Visas typically need a U.S.-based company to sponsor the applicant. Forms and fees depend on the length of employment in the United States. For more information about obtaining an employment visa, visit USCIS's [website](#).

Student Visa requirements vary depending on the type of course and duration of stay. Some student visas will allow the applicant to work as well as study, while many strictly forbid working. To find more information about student visas, check out the Student and Exchange Visitor [website](#).

The most common visas are listed above. However, there are a few select **Special Immigrant Visas** for religious workers, broadcasters, and a list of other specialized categories which can be found [here](#). The [U.S. Department of State website](#) explains how to start this special visa process.

GREEN CARD

What is a Green Card?

A Green Card also known as a Permanent Residency, gives the holder "authorization to live and work in the United States on a permanent basis." The [USCIS website](#) gives us this definition along with the eligibility requirements.

How to apply for a Green Card

The application process for a Green Card is different depending on where you are currently residing and what type of visa you currently hold. Typically you would apply to register as or adjust status to a permanent resident. For more information on applying for a Green Card, visit the USCIS [website](#).

What happens after you get your Green Card?

Typically, new permanent residents will receive a conditional Green Card which last 2 years and must be renewed in the 90 days before it expires. If you have a 10 year Green Card, you will have to renew it within the 6 months before it expires. For more information on how to renew or replace your Green Card, visit the [USCIS website](#). To view the rights and responsibilities of Green Card holders click [here](#).

CITIZENSHIP

What does Citizenship mean?

Becoming a [citizen](#), or naturalizing, means that you can live, work, and vote in the United States sharing all of the rights and responsibilities of all American Citizens. Watch USCIS's [video](#) for an overview of the process.

What is the process of becoming an American Citizen?

There are three main parts to becoming an American Citizen. First, you must [apply](#) and pay the fee. Second, once your application is accepted, you will have to take a civics test and an English test. For more information on these exams, click [here](#). Third, you'll have to attend a ceremony where you swear your oath to the United States.

Can I have dual Citizenship?

U.S. laws don't say much about dual citizenship so the answer is maybe. It really depends on your country of origin or what country you're applying to. For more information on dual citizenship, visit the U.S. Department of State's [website](#).

LOW-COST ATTORNEY SERVICES

If for any reason you need an attorney, there are a few low-cost options available in Minnesota. Be aware, however, that because they are low-cost, they might be overwhelmed and your application could wait for quite a while. Immigration Advocates house a list of options on their [website](#) including Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid and Immigrant Law Center – St. Paul. Below is just a few of the options available in Minnesota.

Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid-Immigration Law Project

Areas of expertise:

- Adjustment of Status,
- Asylum applications,
- Consular Processing,
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA),

- Employment authorization,
- Family-based petitions,
- NACARA,
- Naturalization/Citizenship,
- Removal hearings,
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status,
- T visas,
- Temporary Protected Status (TPS),
- U visas,
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions

Locations served: Anoka and Hennepin counties

Website: www.mylegalaid.org

Contact: MPLSimmigrationintake@mylegalaid.org or (612) 332-1441

Immigrant Law Center – St. Paul

Areas of expertise:

- Adjustment of Status,
- Asylum applications,
- Consular Processing,
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA),
- Employment authorization,
- Family-based petitions,
- Habeas Corpus,
- NACARA,
- Naturalization/Citizenship,
- Removal hearings,
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status,
- T visas,
- Temporary Protected Status (TPS),
- U visas,
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions

Locations served: The state of Minnesota and many of its detention facilities

Website: www.ilcm.org

Contact: (651) 641-1011

The Advocates for Human Rights

Free legal services and interpreters to asylum seekers.

330 2nd Ave., S., Suite 800

Minneapolis, MN

612-341-9845

<http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/>

American Civil Liberties Union of Minnesota

Civil liberties protections for Minnesotans through litigation, public education and lobbying.

2300 Myrtle Ave., Suite 180,

St. Paul, MN

651-6454097

<https://www.aclu-mn.org/>

Council on American-Islamic Relations

Promotes justice and protects rights of Minnesota Muslims.

2511 E. Franklin Ave. Suite 100

Minneapolis, MN

<http://www.cairmn.com/>

Center for New Americans – University of Minnesota Law School

Free legal services to immigrants and refugees, and educates noncitizens about their legal rights.

Walter F. Mondale Hall

229 19th Ave. S.

Minneapolis, MN

<https://www.law.umn.edu/james-h-binger-center-new-americans>

Hennepin County Law Library

Free public access legal books, journals and databases.

C-2451 Government Center

300 S. 6th St.

Minneapolis, MN

<https://www.hclawlib.org/>

Hennepin County Offices of Multicultural Services

Connects immigrants and refugees to services offered by the county and community partners. 32 languages spoken.

1201 E. Lake St.

Minneapolis, MN

<https://www.hennepin.us/residents/human-services/multi-cultural-services>

International Institute of Minnesota

Job assistance, English classes, citizenship, refugee resettlement.

1694 Como Ave.

St. Paul, MN

651-647-0191

<https://iimn.org/>

Minnesota State Bar Association

Directory of Minnesota lawyers, access to free or low-cost legal services, and educational videos and publications.

600 Nicollet Mall, Suite 300

Minneapolis, MN

612-333-1183

<http://www.mnbar.org>

Navigate MN

Resources for immigrant young adults facing financial, social and legal barriers.

2525 E. Franklin Ave.

Minneapolis, MN

<http://www.navigatemn.org/>

Immigration Advocates Network– National Legal Services Directory

Resources directory of nonprofits offering free or low-cost immigration legal services.

Searchable by state, county, or detention facility.

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