

My parents are hitting, slapping, or kicking me.

My parents left me here and I can't make it on my own.

Is there a way I can apply for a green card without their help?

If you are being abused by your parent or stepparent who is a legal resident or citizen, you may qualify to become a permanent resident under the Violence Against Women Act. This Act applies to boys, girls, men and women. Usually, people who are under 18 have to apply for a green card with their parents' help, but if you are being abused by a citizen or legal permanent resident parent, you can apply on your own.

If you are being abused or neglected, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) can also help keep you safe. DCF cannot refuse services to you because of your immigration status, and can find you a safe place to live if you are being abused or neglected at home.

If any of these situations apply to you, come see us.

What if I am in DCF custody?

Some kids who are in DCF custody because of abuse or neglect may be eligible to get a green card by applying for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). To be eligible for SIJS, you have to be in DCF care because of abuse or neglect, and a judge has to determine that it would not be good for you to return to your home country. Talk to us if you think you might qualify for SIJS.

I am here illegally. Can I still go to school?

Yes. Even if you are here illegally you have the right to go to public school through high school. You also have the right to free and reduced-price lunch and breakfast programs if you qualify financially.



I am not a citizen or legal permanent resident. Can I apply for financial aid to go to college?

Immigrants without a green card do not qualify for federal financial aid and must pay the higher out-of-state tuition rate at public colleges in Connecticut. However, there are private sources of school funding that do not require citizenship or residency, and some colleges and universities do not charge tuition at all for families that meet certain income guidelines. Contact us for more information.

I am not a citizen or legal permanent resident. Can I apply for public benefits like welfare, food stamps, and medical?

No. Only citizens and legal permanent residents can apply for most public benefits. If you said you were a citizen or a legal permanent resident to collect public benefits, this may mean that you are committing fraud. If you commit fraud, it may be harder for you to become a resident or citizen later.

I am pregnant. Can I get benefits for myself or my baby?

If you are pregnant, you can receive WIC benefits, some medical benefits, and you can apply for benefits for your child if s/he was born in the United States.

Immigrants without a green card also qualify for emergency medical care.



Some facts about
Immigration

What are my rights?

How can I become a legal permanent resident?

Where can I get help?

For immigration questions concerning children and teenagers

Center for Children's Advocacy

Hartford: (860) 570-5327

Bridgeport: (203) 223-8975

For general immigration questions

International Institute

Hartford: (860) 692-3085

Bridgeport / Main Office: (203) 336-0141

Stamford: (203) 965-7190



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General Immigration Information

What is a legal permanent resident?

A legal permanent resident - someone who has a "green card" - can live and work permanently in the United States and travel outside the United States. Legal permanent residents cannot vote, and they can be deported for certain criminal convictions or other serious problems. Legal permanent residents must always keep a permanent home in the United States and should not leave the country for more than one year, unless they first get special permission from the immigration agency, because they may lose their permanent resident status.

How do I become a legal permanent resident?

To become a legal resident, you must apply for a "green card" from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). The green card allows you to live and work in the U.S. permanently. A green card must be renewed every ten years.

Not everyone will qualify for a green card, and getting one can take a long time. It all depends on your age, your country of origin, your legal status and the legal status of your family.

Here are a few examples of ways that people qualify for green cards:

Family Petition. Certain relatives of U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents qualify for green cards. Generally, family-based options may work for spouses, children (including stepchildren, adopted children and adult children), parents (including stepparents), brothers and sisters of adult U.S. citizens. Also, spouses and children of U.S. permanent residents may be able to get green cards through their U.S. relative.

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. If you are placed in the care of the Department of Children and Families because you were neglected or abused, you may qualify for a green card. There is more information about Special Immigrant Juvenile Status on the other side of this brochure.



T & U Visas. Anyone who has been the victim of certain violent crimes and has been helpful to the police in investigating those crimes may qualify for a T or U Visa. Once you get a T or U Visa, you may be able to apply for a green card.

Domestic Violence. If you have been physically abused by a parent or spouse who is a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident, or if you are under 18 and your parent has been abused by a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident, you may qualify for a green card under a law called the Violence Against Women Act. This law protects not only women but also boys, girls and men. There is more information about the Violence Against Women Act on the other side of this brochure.

How can I become a U.S. citizen?

If you were born in the U.S., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands or another U.S. territory, you are a U.S. citizen by birth. Also, if you were born to a U.S. citizen while living outside of the U.S. or if your parent became a U.S. citizen while you were less than 18 years old, you *may* qualify as a citizen. If you are not a citizen by birth, you must apply to become a citizen. This process is called naturalization.

If you are under 18, in order to become naturalized, you must apply with the help of your parents unless you meet certain exceptions. Contact us for more information.

