

## **IMMIGRATION: KEY TERMS**

**Asylum** – Legal status granted to foreign nationals already in the United States or the border who meet the international law definition of a “refugee.”

**CIS/USCIS (Citizenship and Immigration Services)** – The bureau within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that administers applications for immigration benefits such as visas, adjustment of status, and naturalization. The USCIS Asylum Officer Corps makes decisions on affirmative asylum claims.

**DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival)** – An American immigration policy launched in 2012 by President Obama that allows some individuals brought to the United States illegally as children a renewable two-year period of relief from deportation and eligibility for a work permit. This policy has been rescinded by the current administration and is being litigated in the courts.

**Deportation** – Expulsion of a non-citizen from the United States. People who can be deported include non-citizens (including lawful permanent residents) with criminal convictions; visa overstays; refugee/asylum seekers; and those who entered without inspection (for example, by crossing the border unlawfully). Once removed, a non-citizen faces legal bars for a time period that prevent their return or sometimes they are permanently barred.

**Detention** – The policy of holding individuals suspected of or charged with violating immigration law.

**DHS (Department of Homeland Security)** – Federal agency charged with safeguarding the American people, our homeland, and values. In 2003, through the Department of Homeland Security Act, DHS absorbed most of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and took on its duties. DHS split immigration-related duties among three separate agencies: (CIS) - Citizenship and Immigration Services, (ICE) - Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and (CBP) - Customs and Border Protection.

**Dream Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors)** – A bill first introduced in 2001 that would allow current, former, and future undocumented high-school graduates and GED recipients a three-step pathway to U.S. citizenship through college, work, or the armed services.

**ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement)** – The bureau within DHS that enforces immigration laws and conducts the apprehension, detention, and deportation of immigrants. ICE used to be part of what was known previously as the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

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**Immigration** – The process of moving across a boundary in order to take up permanent or semi-permanent residence.

**Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR)** – An immigrant with a “green card” who has been lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence. An immigrant can become a permanent resident in several different ways. Most individuals are sponsored by a family member or employer in the United States. Other individuals may become LPRs through refugee or asylee status or other humanitarian programs.

**Naturalization** – The process by which U.S. citizenship is granted to a foreign citizen or national after they fulfill the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

**Permanent resident** – Any person who is not a United States citizen or national, but who is permanently residing in the U.S. legally, as a lawfully recorded permanent immigrant. Also referred to as a lawful permanent resident (LPR), immigrant, permanent resident alien, resident alien permit holder, and green card holder.

**Refugee** – People who are unable to remain in their country of origin due to persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Refugees are subject to ceilings by geographic area set annually by the President in consultation with Congress. They are eligible for lawful permanent resident status after one year of continuous presence in the United States. Refugees differ from asylees in that people outside the United States apply for refugee status, but people already in the United States apply for asylee status. One year after arriving in the United States, a refugee must apply to become a lawful permanent resident (LPR), and after five more years, can apply for U.S. citizenship.

**Temporary Protect Status (TPS)** – A designation given to countries by the Secretary of Homeland Security due to conditions in the country that temporarily prevent the country's nationals from returning safely, or in certain circumstances, where the country is unable to handle the return of its nationals adequately. During a TPS designation, individuals who are TPS beneficiaries are not removable from the U.S., can obtain employment authorization, and may be granted travel authorization.

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**Visa** – An endorsement placed inside a passport indicating that a person is allowed to enter, leave, or stay in a country for a specified amount of time. In the U.S., there are two types of visas: an immigrant visa, issued to a foreign national who intends to live and work permanently in the United States, and a non-immigrant visa, which is issued to foreign nationals seeking to enter the United States on a temporary basis for tourism, business, medical treatment and certain types of temporary work.

**White supremacy** – The belief that white people are superior to people of other races; can also be defined as a historically-based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white peoples and European nations for the purposes of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege.

**Xenophobia** – Dislike or prejudice of people from other countries.