

OVERVIEW

A person who has U.S. citizenship or a "green card" (legal permanent residency) can help some family members get a green card too. A citizen can apply for a spouse or children. A citizen who is at least 21 years old can apply for parents, sisters, and brothers. A legal permanent resident can apply for a spouse or unmarried child. Sometimes the immigrant's children can benefit too.

The rules for getting a green card through a family member depend on immigration status, age, relationship, marital status, trips outside the U.S., how a person came into the U.S., and more. The government has a waiting list for immigrant visas. Some family members have to wait in line for a visa. Some cases are fast, and others have to wait for years to get an immigrant visa. Some people can wait in the U.S. for the process, but others have to leave for an interview at a consulate. There are special rules for U.S. military families.

This is not everything to know about family-based immigration. See "Resources" to learn more. Go to "Find Legal Help" to connect with nonprofit legal services.

RESOURCES

Here is where to find more information:

[How can a citizen help a relative?](#)

This is a government flyer on how a U.S. citizen can help a family member get a green card.

[How can a legal permanent resident help a relative?](#)

This is a government flyer on how someone with a green card can help a family member get a green card too.

[Immigrant Visa Process](#)

The government has a waiting list for immigrant visas. Some family members have to wait in line for a visa. The "priority date" is when someone applied for a visa, and it is the person's place in line. Use this link to learn about the immigrant visa process and check the "visa bulletin" (waiting list).

FORMS

[I-130 Petition for Alien Relative](#)

This is the form and instructions for a citizen or legal permanent resident to help a family member get a green card.

[I-485 Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status](#)

This is the form and instructions for a person to apply for a green card.

[I-864 Affidavit of Support](#)

This is the form and instructions to prove a person has enough money to help a family member get a green card.

[Other Immigration Forms](#)

Forms are free on the government website. Use a computer to click on a form number and download it. The form can be printed blank or filled in on the computer and then printed. Or call 1-800-870-3676 to ask the government to send a form.