

Asylum

What is Asylum?

- In the United States, asylum is a protection that is offered to individuals that fear returning to their country of origin, especially individuals that have been hurt or threatened in the past.

Who Qualifies?

- If you are afraid of being hurt in your home country, or if in anyway you have been hurt or threatened by the government in your home country, or by an individual or entity from whom the government of your home country cannot protect you, you could qualify for asylum.

What are the benefits?

- Someone who is granted asylum can live legally in the United States. After a year of being granted asylum, a person becomes eligible to apply for legal permanent residency. Four years after becoming a legal permanent resident in the United States, the person becomes eligible to apply for citizenship, if the person is 18 years or older.
- After receiving legal permanent residency status (green card) or becoming a citizen, a person may petition for immigration benefits for certain eligible family members, such as his or her parents.
- Individuals who are granted asylum could qualify for financial benefits offered by their respective state government, including: financial assistance, health insurance, nutritional assistance, and employment training.

What are the disadvantages?

- Someone who is granted asylum cannot return to his or her country of origin as easily. Before becoming a citizen, the person must obtain a specific form of permission from the United States in order for the person to travel back to his or her country of origin. The protection of asylum could be lost if the person returns to his or her country of origin before obtaining permission from the United States.