

Services Available for Asylees and Refugees

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Services Available to Refugees and Asylees

What Should I Show an Employer When Applying for a Job?

OVERVIEW

Refugees and Asylees are authorized to work in the United States. The date employment authorization begins for refugees and asylees is the date on which they obtain their status and continues for as long as they remain in that status. While refugees and asylees are not required to obtain an Employment Authorization Document (EAD), they may show their eligibility to work in the United States by applying for an EAD by using Form I-765. Individuals may also establish their eligibility to work by using alternate documents, as indicated on Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, such as an unrestricted Social Security Card along with an appropriate government-issued photo identity document.

- A. [What Do I Show to an Employer if I am a Refugee?](#)
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Services Available to Refugees and Asylees

What Do I Show to an Employer if I am a Refugee?

OVERVIEW

Refugees are not required to obtain an Employment Authorization Document in order to prove work eligibility. A refugee may prove employment eligibility by using a variety of documents. In most cases, refugees may prove employment eligibility by showing a prospective employer an unrestricted Social Security Card and an acceptable identity document as described on Form I-9. Refugees may also use Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, as temporary evidence of employment eligibility after entry into the United States.

If you entered the United States as a refugee, you should have been given a Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, when you were inspected at a port of entry. You may use your Form I-94 as temporary proof of your authorization to work in the United States as long as it has an unexpired refugee admission stamp. The Form I-94 may be used as proof for up to 90-days after your entry into the United States. If you use your Form I-94 to prove your employment eligibility, you will be required to show additional evidence at the 90-day re-verification timeframe.

You can get additional evidence of your eligibility to work by using your Form I-94 and a government-issued photo identity document to apply for an unrestricted Social Security Card. For information about how to apply for a Social Security Card, you can visit the Social Security Administration's Web site at www.ssa.gov, or you can call them at 1-800-772-1213. Once you have your Social Security Card, you can show it to your employer as proof that you are eligible to be employed in the United States.

If you want additional documentation, you can also apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). You can get an EAD by filing [Form I-765](#), Application for Employment Authorization, with USCIS. If you choose to file a Form I-765, please read the instructions carefully before completing and submitting the form. The form can be downloaded from our Web site at www.uscis.gov.

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What Do I Show to an Employer if I am an Asylee?

OVERVIEW

Asylees are not required to obtain an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) in order to prove work eligibility. However, in most cases, EADs are automatically generated and issued to asylees. An asylee may prove employment eligibility by using a variety of documents. Asylees may prove employment eligibility by showing a prospective employer an unrestricted Social Security Card and an acceptable identity document as described on Form I-9.

As an asylee, you are authorized to work in the United States. As proof, you may use the Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Document, which was issued to you when you were granted asylum. The Form I-94 should have a stamp showing that you were granted asylum under Section 208 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). You may also use this document, along with your asylum approval notice and government-issued photo identity document, to apply for an unrestricted Social Security Card. For information about how to apply for a Social Security Card, you can visit the Social Security Administration's Web site at www.ssa.gov, or you can call them at 1-800-772-1213. Once you have your Social Security Card, you can show it to your employer as proof that you are eligible to be employed in the United States.

As an asylee, you are not required to obtain an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). However, in most cases, an EAD is automatically generated for you if you have been granted asylum. If you were granted asylum by an Immigration Judge and have not received your EAD, you should schedule an INFOPASS appointment at your nearest USCIS office. When you appear for your appointment, you should bring a copy of the Immigration Judge's order granting you asylum and documents establishing your identity. If you were granted asylum by USCIS and have not received your EAD, you will need to schedule an appointment with the USCIS Asylum Office having jurisdiction over your case.

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How Can I Obtain a Refugee Travel Document?

OVERVIEW

Refugees and asylees are granted protection in the United States because they are fleeing their country of nationality due to persecution. As a result, these individuals cannot acquire a passport from their country of nationality. Individuals who have been granted refugee or asylee status in the United States may instead apply for a Refugee Travel Document. This document allows the refugee or asylee to travel outside of and return to the United States and serves as a substitute for a passport. Individuals may obtain a Refugee Travel Document by filing Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, with USCIS.

If you are a refugee or asylee and wish to travel outside the United States, you will need to apply for a Refugee Travel Document. The Refugee Travel Document will allow you to travel outside of and return to the United States, while maintaining your status. The document may be used in place of a passport and is similar in appearance to a U.S. passport.

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- [Why would I need a Refugee Travel Document?](#)
- [How may I apply for a Refugee Travel Document?](#)
- [How may I get the Form I-131?](#)
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- [Am I going to receive an appointment to get my fingerprints and photographs done?](#)
- [Can I travel back to the country where I experienced past persecution or claim a fear of future persecution?](#)
- [Can I travel back to the country from which I claimed persecution once I have been granted permanent residence based on a grant of asylum?](#)

What is a Refugee Travel Document?

The Refugee Travel Document, also called Form I-571, is similar in appearance to a U.S. passport and may be used by refugees and asylees to travel and to return to the United States. The document may be used in place of a passport. A Refugee Travel Document is valid for 1 year, or until the date the refugee or asylee status expires, whichever comes first.

Why would I need a Refugee Travel Document?

If you are an asylee or refugee and want to temporarily travel outside the United States, you will need a Refugee Travel Document to maintain your status while traveling outside of the United States and to return.

How may I apply for a Refugee Travel Document?

If you need a Refugee Travel Document, you should file a Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, with USCIS. Please read the instructions carefully before completing and submitting the form. You may find the form and instructions on our [Web site](#).

How may I obtain the Form I-131?

You may find and download the form and instructions on our [Web site](#). If you do not have access to the internet, you can call our forms request line at 1-800-870-3676 or we can place the order on your behalf if you are ready.

Where do I file the Form I-131 for a Refugee Travel Document?

The Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, in some instances can be completed and filed electronically or downloaded and mailed. Our [Web site](#) will provide instructions on filing electronically or by mail. The instructions will provide you with all of the information you need in order to properly file your application, including where to file the form if applying by mail.

Am I going to receive an appointment to get my fingerprints and photographs done?

If you have applied for a Refugee Travel Document, you will need to provide biometrics (such as fingerprints and photographs) at a USCIS Application Support Center (ASC). After you file Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, you will be scheduled for an ASC appointment; it is very important that you attend your appointment and bring your appointment notice and identity documents with you. Biometrics is necessary for USCIS to conduct background and security checks and also to create your secure travel document.

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Can I travel back to the country I fled or claimed a fear of future persecution?

If your travel abroad suggests that you no longer need the protection of the United States, your status as a refugee or asylee may be terminated. If you return to the country where you experienced past persecution or claim a fear of future persecution, you may be required, upon your return to the United States, to explain your travel to that country to avoid losing your asylee or refugee status. In some cases, returning to the country that you fled can be considered evidence that your fear of persecution is not genuine or that you no longer need the protection of the United States.

In some limited circumstances, you may be able to return to the country where you experienced persecution or claim a fear of future persecution if your stay is of a short duration and you can demonstrate that your return to that particular country was due to compelling reasons.

Can I travel back to the country from which I claimed persecution once I have been granted permanent residence based on a grant of asylum?

If you return to the country where you experienced past persecution or claim a fear of future persecution, you may be required, upon your return to the United States, to explain your travel to that country to avoid losing your status. In some cases, returning to the country that you fled can be considered evidence that your fear of persecution is not genuine or that you no longer need the protection of the United States.

A person granted permanent residence based on a grant of asylum is still subject to the possible consequences of returning to the country of claimed persecution. An individual's underlying asylum status may be terminated even if the individual has already become a lawful permanent resident. In some limited circumstances, you may be able to return to the country you fear if your stay is of a short duration and you can demonstrate that your return to that particular country was due to compelling reasons.

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How Can I Become a Permanent Resident Based on Refugee or Asylee Status?

OVERVIEW

Refugees are required to apply for permanent residence one year after entering the United States. If the individual is a child or spouse of a refugee, and has an approved I-730, the person must apply for adjustment of status one year after admission to the United States as a refugee. If the person was in the United States when the I-730 petition was approved, the one year period starts at the time of the approval of the I-730. Asylees may apply for permanent residence one year after being granted asylum, but are not required to do so.

I am a Refugee. How Can I Become a Permanent Resident?

You are required by law to apply for permanent residence one year after entry into the United States in refugee status. To apply for permanent residence, you will need to file Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status, with USCIS. You can download the form on our Web site, www.uscis.gov or you can call our forms request line at 1-800-870-3676. If you are the child or spouse of a refugee, and you have an approved I-730, you must apply for adjustment of status one year after admission to the United States as a refugee. If you were in the United States when the I-730 petition was approved, the one year period starts at the time the I-730 was approved.

I am an Asylee. How Can I Become a Permanent Resident?

While you are not required to apply for permanent residence, doing so may be in your best interests. You may apply for permanent residence one year after being granted asylum in the United States. To apply for permanent residence, you will need to file Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status, with USCIS. You can download the form on our Web site, www.uscis.gov or you can call our forms request line at 1-800-870-3676.

Note: [More FAQs about becoming a Permanent Resident based on Refugee or Asylee status](#)

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How Can I Become a Permanent Resident Based on Refugee or Asylee Status?

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- [How long do I have to be in refugee/asylee status before I can apply for permanent residence in the United States?](#)
- [If I have been convicted of a crime or I am inadmissible to the United States, am I still eligible to adjust status in the United States?](#)
- [Are there any additional applications I can or should file concurrently with the I-485?](#)
- [Do I have to file a separate I-485 for every member of my family if I am the principal refugee/asylee?](#)
- [Am I required to submit a medical examination with my adjustment of status application?](#)
- [Do my fingerprints have to be taken for the adjustment of status application?](#)
- [Where do I go to have my fingerprints taken?](#)
- [Am I required to attend an interview in order to adjust my status?](#)

What are the initial eligibility requirements for a refugee/asylee applying for permanent residence?

If you are an asylee, you may apply for permanent residence 1 year after being granted asylum if you:

- Have been physically present in the United States for at least 1 year after being granted asylum;
- Continue to meet the definition of a refugee (or continue to be the spouse or child of such a refugee);
- Have not abandoned your refugee status;
- Are not firmly resettled in any foreign country; and
- Continue to be admissible to the United States (A waiver may be available to you if you are now inadmissible)

If you are a refugee, you must apply for permanent residence 1 year after you are admitted to the United States as a refugee if you:

- Have been physically present in the United States for at least 1 year after being admitted as a refugee;
- Have not had your refugee admission terminated; and
- Have not already acquired permanent resident (green card) status

How long do I have to be in refugee/asylee status before I can apply for permanent residence in the United States?

You must be physically present in the United States in refugee/asylee status for a period of at least one year before you file for adjustment of status.

If I have been convicted of a crime or I am inadmissible to the United States am I still eligible to adjust status in the United States?

Please call our toll-free number at 1-800-375-5283 for assistance with this question.

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Are there any additional applications I can or should file concurrently with the I-485?

Yes, you should submit the following forms as part of the process of applying for permanent residence:

- Form G-325A, Biographical Information
- If you are a refugee, you will need to submit the Form I-693A, Vaccination Supplement to Medical Examination
- If you are an asylee, you will need to submit a completed Form I-693, Report of Medical Examination and Vaccination Record

Regardless of your status, you may also submit the following forms:

- Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Representative (G-28), if you are represented by an attorney;
- Application for Travel Document (I-131), if you need to travel outside the United States while your application is processed; or
- Application by Refugee for Waiver on Grounds of Excludability, if applicable (I-602)

Please carefully read the instructions before completing and submitting your application.

Do I have to file a separate I-485 for every member of my family if I am the principal refugee/asylee?

You should prepare a separate Form I-485 application packet for each member of your family who wishes to become a permanent resident. All family members' application packets should be mailed together in the same mailing envelope.

Am I required to submit a medical examination with my adjustment of status application?

If you are an asylee, you will need to submit a completed Form I-693. Form I-693 must be completed by a certified civil surgeon. A list of certified civil surgeons in your area may be found on our website. **Note:** If you want assistance locating a civil surgeon, please use the [Civil Surgeon Locator](#) on our Website at www.uscis.gov.

If you were admitted to the United States as a refugee and are now applying for adjustment of status one year following your first admission, you do not need to repeat the entire medical exam you had overseas, unless medical grounds of inadmissibility were found at the time of arrival in the United States or if your refugee status was granted to you through approval of a Form I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition.

USCIS will accept Form I-693 with only pages 1, 3, and 5 submitted for refugees or any other class of alien who was only required to complete the vaccination portion of the exam. Pages 2 and 4 should be left blank as they do not apply.

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Do my fingerprints have to be taken for my adjustment of status application?

You will usually need to have your fingerprint, photo, and signature taken after filing the Form I-485.

Where do I go to have my fingerprints taken?

Biometrics (such as fingerprints and photographs) are usually taken at the nearest USCIS Application Support Center (ASC). You will receive an appointment notice in the mail; please refer to the appointment notice for information about where and when you should go to have your biometrics taken.

Am I required to attend an interview in order to adjust my status?

According to regulations, an immigration officer will interview each applicant for adjustment of status; however, there are exceptions to this rule. Therefore, your local USCIS office will notify you whether or not an interview is necessary.

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Helping a Relative become an Asylee or Refugee

OVERVIEW

Refugees and asylees may apply for derivative benefits on behalf of a spouse or unmarried child under the age of 21 within two years of admission to the United States as a principal refugee or asylee. If the child or spouse is already in the United States, he or she may be eligible for settlement as a refugee or asylee, regardless of whether he or she is in the country legally or illegally. The relationship between the principal and his/her spouse/child must have existed when the principal was admitted as a refugee or granted asylum and must continue to exist when the principal files Form I-730 (Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition) and when the spouse or child is admitted to the United States or is granted asylee or refugee status.

- A. [I am an Asylee and want to help a Relative Become an Asylee](#)
- B. [I am a Refugee and want to help a Relative Become a Refugee](#)

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I am an Asylee and want to Help a Relative Become an Asylee

OVERVIEW

Asylees are able to help some relatives (husband/wife, or unmarried children under 21) enter the United States. To assist their relative(s), asylees may file Form I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition, with USCIS. In the petition, the primary asylee must demonstrate a familial relationship to any listed beneficiaries. The relationship between the primary asylee and any petitioned relatives must have existed at the time asylum was granted to the petitioner and must continue to exist when the Form I-730 is filed. The Form I-730 must be filed within two years of the original grant of asylum.

What relatives may I petition for?

As an asylee, you may use a Form I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition, to petition for:

- Your [husband or wife](#); and/or
- Your [unmarried children under 21 years of age](#)

Note: Select the appropriate link above to obtain more information.

Can I help other relatives get asylum?

The law limits eligibility to spouses, and unmarried children under the age of 21 years old.

What happens after I file the petition for my relative?

After you file your petition, we will mail you a receipt notice. If your petition is incomplete, we may reject it or ask you for more evidence, which will delay processing. Please send all required papers and documents the first time to avoid delay.

We will notify you when we make a decision regarding your case. If your relative is inside the United States, then the decision we mail you would be the last action necessary for your relative's petition. If your relative is outside the United States, then we will mail you a decision and, if the petition is approved, forward your relative's petition to the U.S. consulate closest to your relative's place of residence. The U.S. consulate will notify your relative regarding the completion of the process.

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How long will it take USCIS to process my petition?

The time to process and approve your petition depends on a number of factors. Once you file, we will send you a receipt with an estimate indicating how long this process may take. In addition, you can check current processing times on our website at www.uscis.gov.

Where can I find additional information about Asylum?

If you would like additional information about asylum in the United States, please visit: www.uscis.gov/asylum.

For more information on how to get Derivative Asylee status continue on the next page

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- [Where Do I file the Form I-730?](#)
- [If my application is approved, how is my spouse notified of the decision?](#)
- [Is there a time limit on when I have to file the I-730?](#)
- [If my spouse becomes a refugee or asylee as a derivative, can he/she file the I-730 later for another family member?](#)

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How Do I Apply to Get Derivative Refugee or Asylee Status for my spouse?

If you want to help your spouse get derivative refugee or asylee status, you need to file Form I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition. You will need to include all supporting documents listed in the form instructions. Form I-730 is available on our website at www.uscis.gov.

Where Do I file Form I-730?

[Form I-730 filing instructions](#)

If my application is approved, how is my spouse notified of the decision?

If your spouse is outside of the United States, your spouse will receive a notice to complete processing at the local U.S. Consulate.

If your spouse is currently inside the United States, USCIS will directly mail an approval notice.

Is there a time limit on when I have to file the I-730?

Yes, you must file a Form I-730 petition for your spouse within two years of the date you were admitted to the U.S. as a refugee or within two years of the date you were granted asylum.

If my spouse becomes a refugee or asylee as a derivative, can he/she file the I-730 later for another family member?

No, a spouse who receives derivative refugee or asylee status cannot file a Form I-730 petition on behalf of other family members.

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- [How Do I Apply to Get Derivative Refugee or Asylee Status for my child?](#)
- [Where Do I file the Form I-730?](#)
- [If my application is approved, how is my child notified of the decision?](#)
- [Is there a time limit on when I have to file the I-730?](#)
- [If my child becomes a refugee or asylee as a derivative, can he/she file the I-730 later for another family member?](#)
- [If my child turns 21 years of age while the I-730 petition is pending, is my child still eligible for derivative refugee or asylee status?](#)

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Can I apply for any of my children, regardless of how he or she became my child?

You may apply for derivative asylum or refugee status for your biological child as long as that child is unmarried and was under the age of 21 at the time you were admitted as a refugee or granted asylum.

You may apply for derivative refugee or asylee status for a child who was already conceived, but not yet born, on the day you were admitted as a refugee or granted asylum.

You may apply for derivative refugee or asylee status for a stepchild if the marriage between you and the child's parent took place before the child's 18th birthday.

You may apply for derivative refugee or asylee status for an adopted child if the adoption took place before the child's 16th birthday and the child has been in your legal custody for at least two years.

How Do I Apply to Get Derivative Refugee or Asylee Status for my child?

If you want to help your child get derivative refugee or asylee status, you need to file Form I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition. You will need to include all supporting documents listed in the form instructions. Form I-730 is available on our website at www.uscis.gov

Where Do I file the Form I-730?

[Form I-730 filing instructions](#)

If my application is approved, how is my child notified of the decision?

If your child is outside the United States, your child will be notified to go to the local U.S. Consulate to complete processing.

If your foreign national child is currently inside the United States, USCIS will directly mail an approval notice.

Is there a time limit on when I have to file the I-730?

Yes, you must file a Form I-730 petition for your child within two years of the date you were admitted to the U.S. as a refugee or within two years of the date you were granted asylee status.

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If my child becomes a refugee or asylee as a derivative, can he/she file the I-730 later for another family member?

No, a child who receives derivative refugee or asylee status cannot file a Form I-730 petition on behalf of other family members.

If my child turns 21 years of age while the I-730 petition is pending, is my child still eligible for derivative refugee or asylee status?

Yes, an unmarried child who turns 21 while the refugee or asylee relative petition is pending may derive status so long as the child was under 21 years of age on the date of filing the application with USCIS.

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I am a Refugee and want to Help a Relative Become a Refugee

OVERVIEW

As a refugee, you are eligible to help your husband, wife, or unmarried child under the age of 21 get refugee status in the United States. To help your relative get refugee status in the United States based upon your own status, you start the process by filing a Form I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition, with USCIS on your relative's behalf. In your petition, you will need to prove your family relationship to the beneficiary.

The I-730 must be filed within two years from the date you entered the United States as a refugee.

What relatives may I petition for?

As a refugee, you may use a Form I-730, Refugee/Asylee Relative Petition, to petition for:

- Your [husband or wife](#); and/or
- Your [unmarried children under 21 years of age](#)

Select the appropriate link above to obtain more information.

Can I help other relatives get refugee status?

The law only limits eligibility to only spouses, and unmarried children less than 21 years of age.

What happens after I file for my relative?

After you file your petition, we will mail you a receipt notice. If your petition is incomplete, we may reject it or ask you for more evidence, which will delay processing. Please send all required papers the first time to avoid delay.

We will notify you when we make a decision regarding your case. If your relative is inside the United States, then the decision we mail you would be the last action necessary for your relative's petition. If your relative is outside the United States, then we will mail you a decision and, if the petition is approved, forward your relative's petition to the U.S. consulate closest to your relative's place of residence. The U.S. consulate will notify your relative regarding the completion of the process.

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How long will it take USCIS to process my petition?

The time to process and approve your petition depends on a number of factors. Once you file, we will send you a receipt that will instruct you as to how to check the status of your case and what you can expect to next receive from USCIS. In addition, you can check current processing times on our website at www.uscis.gov.

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How Do I Change My Address with USCIS, The Immigration Judge and The Board of Immigration Appeals?

OVERVIEW

All non-U.S. citizens inside the United States are required by law to notify USCIS of any change of address within 10 days of moving. Individuals who need to notify USCIS of an address change should file a Form AR-11, Alien's Change of Address Card. It is particularly important for individuals with pending cases to inform USCIS of any new addresses so that notices and documents are sent to the correct location. The Form AR-11 may be mailed in, or it can be completed electronically on www.uscis.gov.

Note: Choose the information below which is appropriate to your situation: whether you have refugee/asylee status, or conditional status either granted by the BIA or an Immigration Judge.

I am a refugee or asylee. How do I change my address with USCIS?

You will need to notify USCIS of your address change by filing a Form AR-11, Alien's Change of Address Card. The Form AR-11 may be mailed in, or it can be completed electronically on www.uscis.gov.

I was granted "conditional asylum status" by an Immigration Judge. What do I need to do to change my address?

If your case was granted by an Immigration Judge, you will need to submit a Form EOIR-33/IC, Change of Address Form, to the Immigration Court that last had jurisdiction over your case. You must submit the Form EOIR-33/IC within 5 days of any address change. You can download the form on the internet at the following address: www.usdoj.gov/eoir/formslist.htm. When you submit the form, you must also send a copy of the Immigration Judge's conditional grant of asylum.

In addition to completing the EOIR-33/IC, you will also need to submit a Form AR-11, Alien's Change of Address Card, to USCIS within 10 days of any change of address. You are required by law to notify us of your change of address within 10 days of moving to your new address. The Form AR-11 can now be completed electronically on our website at: www.uscis.gov.

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I was granted “conditional asylum status” by the Board of Immigration Appeals. What do I need to do to change my address?

If your case was granted by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), you will need to submit a Form EOIR-33/BIA, Change of Address Form. You must submit the form within 5 days of any address change. You can download the form on the internet at the following address:

<http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/formslst.htm>. When you submit the form, you must also send a copy of the BIA's conditional grant of asylum

In addition to completing the EOIR-33/IC, you will also need to submit a Form AR-11, Alien's Change of Address Card, to USCIS within 10 days of any change of address. You are required by law to notify us of your change of address within 10 days of moving to your new address. The Form AR-11 can now be completed electronically on our website at: www.uscis.gov.

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What Assistance and Services Are Available for Refugees and Asylees?

OVERVIEW

Individuals who have obtained refugee or asylum status in the United States may be eligible to receive assistance and services through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). ORR funds and administers programs to help refugees, asylees and other special populations restart their lives in the United States. Programs include cash and medical assistance, employment preparation, job placement and English-language training.

If you are a refugee or asylee, you may be eligible to receive assistance and services through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). ORR helps refugees and asylees start their lives in America and helps them integrate into American society. To find out what programs you are eligible for and where to go for direct assistance, you will need to contact the Office of Refugee Resettlement at 1-800-354-0365.

Additionally, you may find helpful information at the ORR website: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/

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