

EXPLORING IMMIGRATION IN OUR COMMUNITY



JUSTICE AND **MERCY**
LEGAL AID CENTER

JAMLAC – STEVE THOMPSON, SERVANT LEADER

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MISSION: To seek justice for people struggling with poverty and oppression.

Free legal services, including full representation, consultations, workshops, and advocacy for:

- Victims and survivors of abuse or crimes**
- Vulnerable groups**
- Older adults**
- Children in need of protection**

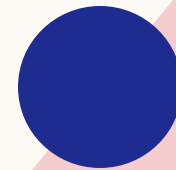
Our work focuses on **immigration, family, and older adult law**

THINGS TO KNOW

- 📌 We'll focus on pre-submitted questions. **You can submit questions in the chat** and we will try to answer them at the end if we have time.
- 📌 **We cannot answer specific immigration case questions**, as each case requires individualized research, but we will cover general updates and insights.
- 📌 **This webinar is being recorded**, and we'll share a **private link upon request**.
- 📌 We will email you the presentation and all resources mentioned will be listed at www.jamlac.org/resources

SULMA MENDOZA RIOS, ESQ.

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AGENDA

- Current Status on Certain Immigration Policies
 - Temporary Protected Status
 - Unaccompanied Children
 - Office of Refugee Resettlement and Funding
 - Afghan Evacuation and Resettlement
 - Sensitive Spaces
- Immigration Enforcement Actions
- Call to Action
- Questions

TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS

What is it?

TPS is a humanitarian form of relief that does not lead to permanent immigration status

It was established in 1990 under The Immigration Act of 1990 to provide temporary protection from deportation, grants a work permit and are eligible to apply for travel abroad (a/k/a Advance Parole)

Who authorizes TPS?

The Secretary of Homeland Security has the authority to designated what country is afforded TPS. Reasons a country can be designated for TPS:

1. An ongoing armed conflict
2. An environmental disaster
3. Extraordinary and temporary conditions (a foreign state prevents a national from returning to the country safely)

WHAT COUNTRIES CURRENTLY HAVE TPS?

There are currently 27 countries that have TPS:

- Afghanistan- ongoing armed conflict, economic instability
- Burma (f/k/a Myanmar)- humanitarian crisis caused by a military coup in 2021
- Cameroon- ongoing armed conflict
- El Salvador- two major earthquakes in 2021
- Ethiopia- ongoing armed conflict
- Haiti- widespread violence, limited access to basic necessities like healthcare and food
- Honduras- Hurricane Mitch 1998
- Lebanon- ongoing armed conflict and humanitarian crisis
- Nepal- environmental disaster- earthquake in 2015
- Nicaragua- Hurricane Mitch 1998
- Somalia- ongoing armed conflict
- South Sudan- ongoing armed conflict
- Sudan- ongoing armed conflict
- Syria- ongoing armed conflict
- Ukraine- ongoing armed conflict
- Venezuela- extraordinary and temporary conditions
- Yemen- ongoing armed conflict

WHO QUALIFIES AND WHEN DOES A PERSON QUALIFY FOR TPS?

Who?

Nationals of Designated Countries

When?

During registration period

- Registration period has an end date
- Individual must have entered the U.S. by a specific date

How long is TPS granted?

It is a temporary benefit

- Can be for 6, 12, or 18 months
- Individual must re-register to continue receiving TPS.

Benefits?

- Deportation Protection
- Work Permit
- Eligible to apply for advance parole

CURRENT STATUS OF TPS

- On January 17, 2025, the previous administration redesignated Venezuela as a country who qualifies for TPS, meaning they extended TPS status for Venezuela to October 2, 2026.
- On January 28, 2025, the current administration vacated the notice to extend TPS status to Venezuela.
- On February 1, 2025, the current administration **terminated** TPS under the 2023 designation for Venezuela which is set to end on April 7, 2025.
- On February 20, 2025, the current administration **partially vacated** the July 1, 2024 notice to extend and redesignate Haiti for TPS status. The change to TPS designated for Haiti is that TPS is not extended 18 months as originally granted, but reduced to 12 months, which is set to end August 3, 2025.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN TPS DESIGNATION IS TERMINATED?

The person holding TPS returns to the status they held prior to being granted TPS. So, if a person did not have lawful status prior to TPS, they will revert to no lawful status.

Impact

National Immigration Forum* issued a fact sheet on August 15, 2024 regarding the number of TPS holders:

- Venezuela 344,335
- Haiti 200,005
- El Salvador 180,375
- Afghanistan 8,245

TPS holders have contributed \$4.5 billion to our economy and have contributed \$6.9 billion over a 10-year span.

TPS holders work in essential critical infrastructure positions.

UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN (UAC)

Every year thousands of unaccompanied children arrive at the U.S. Mexico border seeking safety in the U.S.

In 2022, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 128,904 UAC came to the U.S. border seeking safety



UNACCOMPANIED CHILD (UAC)

Who is an UAC?

Under U.S. law it is someone who:

1. Is under the age of 18 years old
2. Without lawful immigration status; and
3. Entered the U.S. without an accompanying parent or legal guardian

Children seek safety in the United States. There are a few reasons children seek safety in the U.S.:

- Escape war
- Gangs
- Violence
- Flee abuse; or
- Reunite with family

WHAT HAPPENS TO AN UAC AFTER ENTERING THE U.S.?

- Children who arrive at our borders and have contact with Customs and Border Patrol,
 - Are placed with the Department of Health and Human Services under the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR);
 - Are placed in immigration removal proceedings (f/k/a deportation proceedings).
 - These children are required to appear before an immigration federal judge.
 - Unlike our state criminal courts who have a public defender program, the children are not provided with an attorney. The children will have to appear in court alone, UNLESS the child can afford a private immigration attorney, Probono attorney or a nonprofit organization provides services.
- Many UAC minors have viable legal options to remain permanently in the U.S. Federal funding is critical to providing services to children in federal court.

CURRENT POLICIES IMPACTING UAC?

On February 18, 2025, the current administration issued a stop work order for legal representation for UAC leaving vulnerable children to navigate a complex federal court system.

On February 21, 2025, an order rescinded the stop work order was issued after major public backlash.

Impact

According to a report by Congressional Research Service, the first 10 months of 2024, approximately 87,475 UAC arrived at our U.S. borders.

If federal funding is cut, UAC will no longer get legal representation.

PRE SUBMITTED QUESTIONS

Question: For friends who entered the United States under Temporary Protected Status, what happens next? Does it matter if they now have a work permit?

Question: While I have a pending immigration application, can I get a document to travel outside of the United States?

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

During the 2024 fiscal year, the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program reported helping 100,034 refugees resettle in the United States.

- This program has historically received bipartisan support since its creation in 1980.
- Resettlement agencies and resettlement funds help to connect those who are fleeing their home countries with essential resources in the US like: housing, cultural adjustments, school, jobs, food, etc. .

Since 1980, USRAP has resettled over 3 million refugees.

This was historically one of the most secure programs in the country.

The benefits include diversity in the United States, economic growth, generating good will abroad, and encouraging other countries to share in accepting refugees fleeing their home countries.

EXECUTIVE ORDERS THAT HAVE AFFECTED REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

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EXECUTIVE ORDERS:

1. Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program
2. Guaranteeing the States Protections Against Invasion
3. Shut Down of Safe Mobility Offices
4. Stope Work Order for U.S. Refugee Program
5. Humanitarian Parole Ended

IMPACT:

- Millions of dollars in federal grant money is frozen and cannot be used to help folks who are already here in the United States.
- 22,000 refugees in the United States are left with limited assistance, even though that money was already appropriated to refugee resettlement.
- Nearly 10,000 awards have been terminated.
- This policy threatens: food security, access to healthcare, access to other essential social services, and the stability of our communities.
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AFGHAN EVACUATION AND RESETTLEMENT

Background:

- Many Afghans who worked for and with the US Military were evacuated from Afghanistan beginning in August 2021 when the Taliban took control.
- Afghans who have been in the United States Since November 21, 2023, might also qualify for TPS.
- Important to know that those who qualify for these benefits are among the most vetted refugees who come to the United States. The application process involves employment letters, confirmation from the US Department of State, interviews a US consulates, etc.

IMPACT

Families of those who were evacuated from Afghanistan are stuck in limbo. This is estimated to be about 200,000 people.

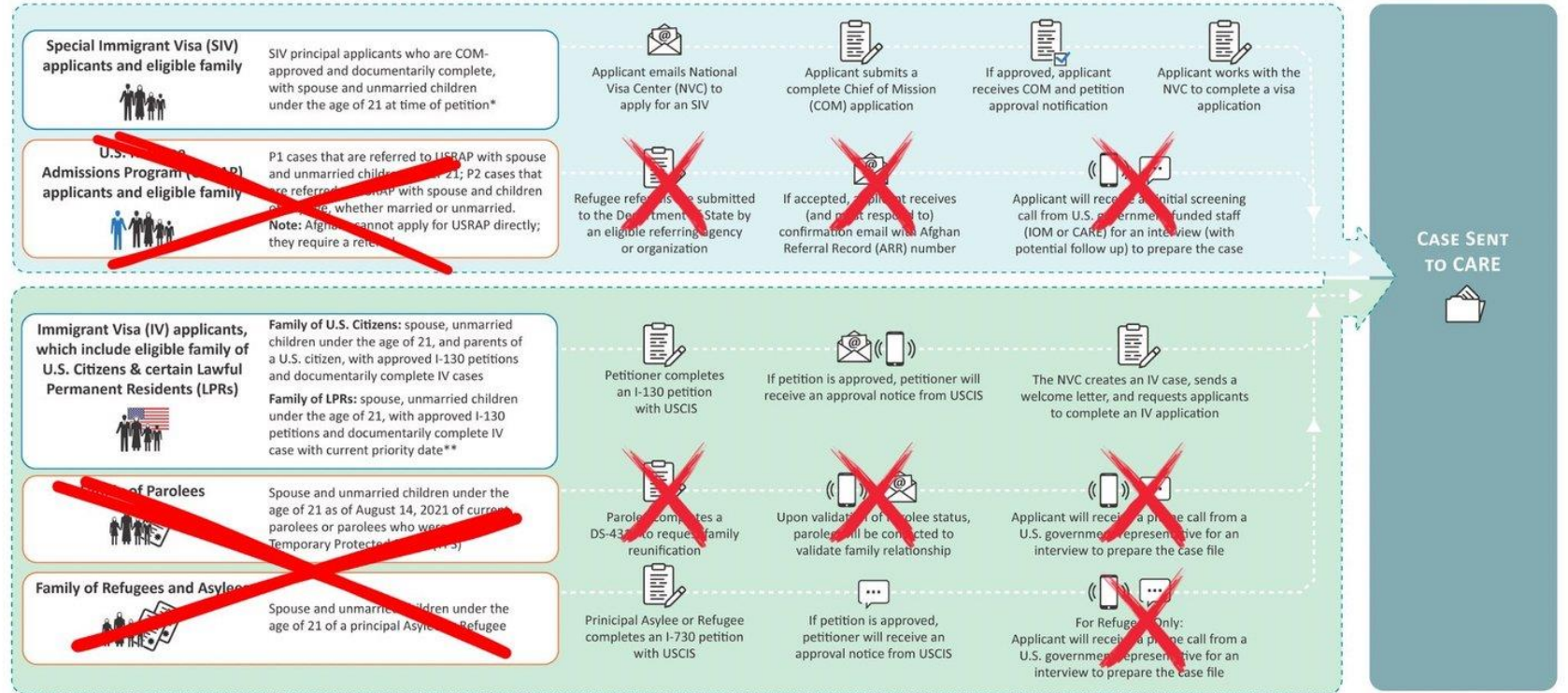
- People lives are in immediate danger
- Flights to the US have been canceled
- Parole statuses have been canceled
- Families are left without options

Devastation to Afghan families in particular who have waited for years to find safety in the United States.

“As the April deadline approaches, thousands of Afghans who risked their lives in support of U.S. missions await clarity on their future amid growing fears of being left behind in increasingly dangerous circumstances.”

Enduring Welcome | Relocation Preparation Process > APPLICANT

Updated to reflect AfghanEvac understanding of Executive Orders signed January 20, 2025



SENSITIVE SPACES

Previously, immigrants were protected from immigration enforcement actions “near sensitive locations.”

- Schools
- Hospitals
- Places of worship
- Social Service Organizations
- Parades, demonstrations, and rallies

Change: the new administration revoking protection in protected areas



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR OUR COMMUNITIES?

ICE agents have been given power to take enforcement actions in any of these spaces using “common-sense.”

ICE still needs either consent or a valid judicial warrant to enter private spaces.

In Colorado:

- Fear of immigration enforcement efforts have struck fear in our communities
 - DPS has said that attendance for February 2025 dropped 3% across the district. Some schools have seen more egregious drops in attendance.
 - For perspective, DPS serves over 90,000 students. 3% of that population is 2,100 children.
- Denver Public Schools filed for a temporary restraining order against the Department of Homeland Security.
- Schools, medical facilities, and social service organizations are having to use precious resources to preparing for immigration enforcement situations.



IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

The Colorado Rapid Response Network has confirmed 26 immigration enforcement actions across the state since January 20, 2025.

The new administration “considers all undocumented immigrants to be criminals.”

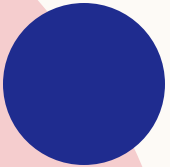
This “criminal definition” includes people who have overstayed visas including:

- Work visas,
- Humanitarian visas, and
- CBP1

And people who have entered the United States without permission.

[Juan Pena's Opinion Editorial in The Denver Post](#)

ICE ENFORCEMENT



PRE SUBMITTED QUESTION

Question: What pathways are available for folks that can lead to lawful status or citizenship?

CITATIONS

- <https://immigrationforum.org/article/fact-sheet-temporary-protected-status/>
- <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R43599/31#:~:text=Since%20FY2014%2C%20apprehensions%20have%20fluctuated,apprehensions%20of%20UAC%20numbered%2087%2C475.>
- <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/12/nx-s1-5288819/refugee-agencies-federal-funds-layoffs>
- <https://afghanevac.org/infographics>
- <https://www.axios.com/2025/02/04/trump-immigration-strategy-homeland-security>

LEARN & STAY INFORMED

- Link to official [Executive Orders](#)
- Read Unbiased News** – List of 10 most unbiased (and 5 most bias) <https://www.purevpn.com/blog/unbiased-news-sources/>
- Get JAMLAC's Newsletter** – Sign up on our website: [Home | Justice and Mercy Legal Aid Center](#)
- Follow Immigration advocate organizations** to see who is being impacted (please note these *are* bias organizations):
 - Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition (CIRC):
<https://www.facebook.com/coloradoimmigrant>
 - Rocky Mountain Immigration Advocacy Network (RMIAN):
<https://www.facebook.com/rmianco>
 - American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) <https://www.facebook.com/aclu>
 - Colorado Rapid Response Network – Immigration -
<https://www.facebook.com/CORapidResponseNetwork>
 - American Immigration Lawyers Association -
<https://www.facebook.com/AILANational>

PRAY

Pray for immigrants/refugees/migrants.
For the next 40 days, read a short Bible
passages that relate in one way or
another to the theme of immigration

[I Was a Stranger Challenge – Evangelical Immigration Table](#)

VOLUNTEER

Opportunities with JAMLAC - Ways to directly support immigrants and refugees

- Sign up on our website (this is the best way to get started in our volunteer program)
[Get Involved | Justice and Mercy Legal Aid Center](#)
- Become a Committed Volunteer at JAMLAC (making copies, mailing, data entry, labeling, etc.)
- Volunteers can be on our short-term list for clinics/workshops/events
- **Attend Upcoming Trainings:**
 - Predicate Orders for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status
 - Court Accompaniment for Protection Orders
 - Court Accompaniment for immigration court by American Friends Service Committee

Volunteer with other groups

- **Immigrant Protection Teams (IPT):** 15 teams throughout the State. Contact: Gina McAfee, IPT Statewide Coordinator, gina.mcafee6@gmail.com
- **LEAD**, <https://jamlac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Learn-Educate-Advocate-Report-LEAR-Tip-Sheet-2.11.25-003-1.pdf>

SUPPORT THE MISSION

- Sustain justice with a monthly gift! We are asking for recurring donations of any size to keep us stable and allow us to continue to grow to seek justice for more people who are struggling with poverty and oppression.
- Prefer a one-time gift? We'll take it! Special gifts help us reach our goals!

www.jamlac.org/support

RESOURCES FOR IMMIGRANTS & THE COMMUNITY

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- Scan the QR Code for community resources and legal aid contacts.

www.jamlac.org/resources

- Legal aid contacts for those needing assistance
- Stay informed through **nonpartisan reports** on immigration.
 - <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/>
 - <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/>
 - <https://www.pewresearch.org/>



www.jamlac.org/resources

QUESTIONS?

TAKE ACTION

WWW.JAMLAC.ORG/TAKE-ACTION



RESOURCES - WWW.JAMLAC.ORG/TAKE-ACTION FOR IMMIGRANTS & THE COMMUNITY



Justice and Mercy Legal Aid Center

www.jamlac.org

303-839-1008