

Immigrant Registration Requirement

The U.S. federal government now requires some undocumented immigrants to register with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This new rule is in effect as of April 11, 2025.

What is registration?

The Trump administration is using a World War II-era law to try to make immigrants give their personal information, including addresses and fingerprints, to immigration officials. This process is called registration.

- Registering could be very dangerous for undocumented immigrants. It could lead to detention, deportation, and possible criminal charges. Government officials have said that they plan to use the information they get from registration to find and arrest people, deport them, or pressure them to leave the U.S. on their own.

Who is required to register?

People over 14 years old who entered the U.S. without permission and have never had contact with immigration authorities are required to register.

- Parents or legal guardians of children under 14 years old who entered without permission and have never had contact with immigration authorities are required to register their children. Those children are also required to register themselves within 30 days of their 14th birthday.
- Anyone who is required to register is also required to tell the government within ten days of any change of address.

Who is considered to already be registered?

The government considers many groups of people to already be registered. You may not have to register under this new rule if you:

- are a lawful permanent resident (Green Card holder)
- are a refugee
- came to the U.S. on a visa, even if it has expired
- are already in immigration court proceedings
- are granted employment authorization (work permit), even if it has expired
- were granted parole, including advance parole, even if it has expired
- applied for lawful permanent residence, even if the application was denied

Are DACA recipients, TPS recipients, or asylum seekers required to register?

- If you are a DACA recipient, TPS recipient, or are seeking or granted asylum, and you have received an Employment Authorization Document (work permit), even if it is expired, you are considered to already be registered.
- If you have DACA or TPS, and you have been granted advance parole, you are also considered to already be registered.
- People who applied for and/or received DACA, TPS, or asylum, but did not receive an Employment Authorization Document, are required to register.

What could happen if I register?

This will depend on your individual situation. If you are undocumented and have not had contact with immigration authorities before, registering could have immigration and criminal consequences.

Immigration consequences:

- The government could try to arrest and deport you using the information you provide when you register.
- Depending on your individual situation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) might send you a letter telling you to report to an ICE office. When you report, ICE might detain you or put you in deportation proceedings.
- If you can't show that you have been in the U.S. for longer than two years, ICE could put you in "expedited removal," a fast-track deportation process that allows ICE to deport people quickly without any chance to go before a judge.

Criminal consequences:

- The government could charge you with a migration-related criminal offense using the information you provide when you register.
- If you have been in the U.S. for less than five years and entered without permission, you could be charged with the federal crime of illegal entry.
- If you were deported from the U.S. before and later returned by crossing the border without permission, you could be charged with the federal crime of illegal reentry.

What could happen if I don't register?

If you are required to register but don't, you may face immigration and criminal consequences.

Immigration consequences:

- Most immigration benefits or visas are "discretionary," meaning the government can use someone's past negative action to deny them the immigration benefit or visa. If you do not register and later apply for an immigration benefit or visa, the government might deny that benefit or visa because you failed to register.

Criminal consequences:

- Failure to register, failure to carry proof of registration, or failure to notify the government within 10 days of a change of address can be punished with fines and/or imprisonment.
- Registering using false information can be punished with fines and/or imprisonment, and lead to deportation.
- Any contact with law enforcement, including ICE or local police, could lead to criminal charges for failing to register in addition to immigration detention and possible deportation.

Resources

- Know Your Rights: Trump's Registration Requirement for Immigrants – National Immigration Law Center (NILC): nilc.org/resources/known-your-rights-trumps-registration-requirement-for-immigrants
- Community Alert: Registration – Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA): chirla.org/registration
- Find legal help near you: ReadyToStay.org/find-help
- Know Your Rights community resources – New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC): nyic.org/KYR

NOTE: This document provides information for community members about the registration requirement. It is not legal advice.

If you are required to register, or have questions about the process, you should talk to a trusted immigration attorney to understand the risks involved before making any decision.