



New Jersey Consortium for Immigrant Children

Guide to Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and Asylum for New Jersey Youth and Their Families

This guide is provided by the New Jersey Consortium for Immigrant Children (NJCIC), a group of advocates that work on behalf of immigrant children and youth to help with legal, educational and health needs. This guide is cosponsored by the New Jersey State Bar Foundation and made possible through funding from the IOLTA Fund of the Bar of New Jersey. This guide was also made possible by Vera Tong, who led graphic design efforts, and by the generous volunteer work of Victoria Ewing from the Catchafire network, who led translation efforts. This guide provides a basic overview of the common ways a young person may be able to fight deportation and stay legally in the United States. **It is information only, not legal advice, and is intended to help you understand whether you may qualify for legal immigration status. It is not a substitute for advice from a qualified lawyer.**

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Introduction

The immigration process is very complex. Here are some things you can do to make it easier to win if you qualify for legal immigration status:

- 1 Do all you can to find a qualified lawyer that can help you.** It's important to get advice about your options and about the risks and benefits of applying for any kind of immigration status. Be careful of fraud.
- 2 Do not miss a hearing in immigration or family court.**
- 3 Avoid any activities that could lead to an arrest or being charged with a crime** - a conviction for certain crimes, such as selling drugs, could prevent you from getting your green card. Remember: Immigration follows federal criminal law, and **marijuana is not legal in the federal system!**

You can learn more by reviewing [NJJCIC's Guide to Immigration Court in New Jersey for Youth and Their Families](#).

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) in New Jersey

If you have been mistreated by one or both of your parents, you may be eligible to apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status or "SIJS". If you are granted SIJS, you can apply for permanent residency, or a "green card," which allows you to live permanently in the U.S. Eventually, you can also apply to become a U.S. citizen.

Who is eligible to apply for SIJS and permanent residency (a "green card")?

The requirements for SIJS are different in every state. **This guide only describes the basic requirements and process for youth who currently live in New Jersey.**

To qualify for SIJS in New Jersey, you must be able to show that:

- You are under 21.
- You were abused, abandoned, neglected, or something similar by **one** or **both** parents and you cannot go back to living with that parent(s).
- It is not in your best interest to return to your country of origin.
- You are not married.
- You currently live in New Jersey AND you live with an adult that is qualified to have custody over you.
- You meet the other requirements for permanent residency (green card), which for youth generally means that you do not have a conviction for certain criminal offenses or something similar.

Tip

See case examples and a checklist on pages [7-8](#).

What does it mean to be abused, abandoned or neglected?

You *might* qualify for SIJS if **at least one** of your parents:

- Has not been in touch with you or does not communicate regularly with you.
- Has physically, sexually or emotionally harmed you.
- Has not protected you from someone else harming you.
- Has provided very little or no financial support to you.
- Has not provided you with emotional support that you need.
- Has not sent you to school.
- Has not provided you with enough food or medical treatment that you need.
- Has passed away.
- Has allowed, encouraged, or forced you to work when you were very young.
- Has treated you in some other way that caused you physical or emotional distress.

These are just **some** of the ways a child may qualify for SIJS. The above list is not a complete list, but is provided to help you determine whether you may qualify. There might be other reasons that a child may qualify for SIJS. The judge will look at the law for taking care of children in New Jersey. What may be common or accepted in some countries might be considered abuse or neglect in New Jersey and could be a basis to apply for SIJS. A lawyer can help you figure it out.

It is only necessary for **ONE** parent to have acted in the ways described in this guide. These things could have happened in your country, in the United States, or in another place.

How can I show it's not in my best interest to return to my country of origin?

If you meet the other SIJS requirements ([page 3](#)), you must also show that it is in your best interests to stay in the U.S. That means that staying in the United States will help you to have a happy, healthy, and safe life.







For example, some of the reasons it would not be in your best interests to return might be:

- You would have the opportunity to go to school or college in the United States, but not in your country of origin.
- You would be safe in the United States from violence, gangs or someone that has harmed you or your family.
- You have a safe place to live and someone to provide food, clothes and other necessities in the United States.
- There is no one in your country of origin who can take care of you.
- You can get medical or mental health treatment or other services in the United States that you could not in your country of origin.

What are the steps to apply for SIJS?

The SIJS and green card process is long and involves different applications to family court and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, also known as USCIS (the agency at immigration that decides SIJS cases).

Here are the steps:

-  Obtain Family Court order (before turning 21!)
-  USCIS:
Apply for SIJS status (before turning 21!)
-  +  USCIS:
If SIJS was granted, apply for a work permit and get scheduled for background check.
(Waiting period for a work permit can be several months.)
-  +  USCIS:
If SIJS was granted, apply for a green card, which will require another background check.
(Waiting period for a green card can be several years.)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

A What if I am over 18?

In New Jersey, youth who are between the ages of 18 and 21 may be able to qualify for SIJS. This is not true in all states. However, it can be more difficult to win a SIJS case if you are over 18. You will have to show that you rely on a parent or another adult and need to be in that adult's custody, even though you are over 18. You must show reasons why you still need the support and guidance of this adult. Being in school or in the process of enrolling can be very helpful for showing that you need the support and guidance of this adult. Even if you are not in school, it is still possible to show that you rely on this adult for financial help, emotional support or advice, and are not ready to live on your own. It is very important that you live in the same house or apartment as the proposed custodian.

B If I have a child or am divorced, can I still apply for SIJS?

If you meet the other requirements, you may still qualify for SIJS even if you have a child of your own, or if you have been married and are now divorced. You cannot qualify for SIJS if you are still married.

C What if a step-parent has mistreated me?

If you have been mistreated by a step-parent, this is not a basis for SIJS. However, if this happened to you, you may wish to discuss what happened with a lawyer who knows about SIJS. If your biological parent was involved in or failed to protect you from the mistreatment, then you may qualify for SIJS.

D If I am granted SIJS and then get my green card, can I apply for a green card for my parent?

No. If your green card is granted as a special immigrant juvenile, you will not be able to file a petition for either of your parents to get a green card. This is true even for a parent that has not mistreated you.

FAQs (continued)

E What if I have been arrested or have a criminal conviction in the U.S.? What if I have a juvenile conviction in the U.S.?

As part of the process to get a work permit and a green card, you will have your fingerprints taken and immigration will run a background check to see if you have any arrests. This area of law is very complicated and you should ask a **qualified lawyer** for advice before applying for SIJS if you:

- Have been arrested in the U.S.
- Have a juvenile offense or had a juvenile delinquency case
- Received a ticket or summons (except a parking ticket)
- Have had any contact with U.S. law enforcement

Even if you have no convictions, if you have been arrested, you should still consult with a lawyer. In this situation, it is very, very important to **talk to a lawyer that has knowledge of immigration law AND knowledge of the criminal laws in the state where you were arrested or have a conviction or delinquency case.**

F Why is the family court involved?

The SIJS process starts in family court where your lawyer will ask a judge to grant custody of you to your caregiver. Your lawyer will ask the judge to provide a special order that contains information about the mistreatment by a parent that must be sent to USCIS (immigration) with an application for SIJS.

G Is the family court the same as the immigration court?

The family court is completely separate from the immigration court and only handles custody and other cases relating to families. A family court judge is not an immigration judge and cannot order you or your family to be deported.

H Is there a deadline to apply for SIJS?

YES! To apply for SIJS, the application must arrive at USCIS (immigration) **BEFORE** you turn 21.

I How long will the process take?

The entire process to get SIJS and a green card takes at least several years to complete. It is hard to predict how long each step will take. **As long as USCIS received your application before you turned 21, you will still be able to apply for a green card even if you turn 21 while you are waiting for SIJS to be approved.**

J Will I be able to work? What is “Deferred Action”?

If your SIJS (Step 2) is approved, you may be able to apply for a work permit while you are waiting to apply for a green card. To apply for a work permit, you must wait for your SIJS to be approved and to receive a letter that you have been granted “Deferred Action”. **Deferred Action means that for a period of four (4) years you can apply for a work permit and you will not be deported while you wait to apply for your green card.**

K If my SIJS was granted, why can't I apply for a green card right away?

If your SIJS is approved, there is a waiting period of several years before you can send in your application for a green card. This is because there is a limit to the number of people that are allowed to apply for green cards every year, which is referred to as a “visa”, so everyone has to wait until there is a visa available for them.

L Can I apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and asylum?

You may read this guide and think you may be eligible to apply for both SIJS and asylum. It is possible to apply for both, but the decision about what to do is complicated. There are different risks and benefits to each, and your case for one may be stronger than for the other. It is best if you discuss the specific facts of your case with a qualified lawyer.

SIJS Case Examples

The following are examples of some cases to help you get an idea of what kinds of situations may qualify for SIJS. **These are only a few examples, there are many more. You may still qualify for SIJS even if you don't see your situation below. Every case is different.**

The best thing is to talk about your case with a knowledgeable lawyer to ask whether you might qualify for SIJS. It's also important to remember that **it's never guaranteed that any case will be approved.**

Example 1: Edgar

Edgar is 18 and from a small village in Honduras. Edgar lived with both of his parents and at age 11 he started working in the fields instead of going to school. Sometimes there was not enough food to eat. Edgar also started having trouble with gangs trying to recruit him and came to the U.S. He now lives with his uncle in New Jersey, who supports him and he goes to school full-time. He is not married.

Could Edgar qualify for SIJS?

Yes, possibly. Edgar could possibly meet the requirements because his parents were not able to provide him with a basic education and nutrition that would be expected in New Jersey. Because Edgar is over 18, his case could be more challenging and he would have to show that he lives with his uncle and relies a lot on him for financial, emotional or other support. He could show that he is better off in the U.S. because he has opportunities to study that he never would have had in Honduras and is safe from the gangs.

Remember, Edgar's case is just one example. There are other ways to qualify for SIJS, and even a case exactly like Edgar's case is not guaranteed to qualify for SIJS. Every case is different.

Important !

Remember, these are just two examples. There are MANY other ways to qualify for SIJS, and even a case exactly like Mariana's or Edgar's is not guaranteed to qualify for SIJS. Every case is different.

Example 2: Mariana

Mariana is 16 years old, is unmarried and is from El Salvador. When she was very young, her father left the family and she has had almost no contact with him since then, though occasionally he sends a little bit of money to her mother, enough for things like buying her candy, and has sometimes called on her birthday. Mariana came to the U.S. and has been reunited with her mother, who she now lives with and who supports her by paying for her housing, food, clothes, and other needs. She is in school, and does not have any family left in El Salvador who can take care of her.

Could Mariana qualify for SIJS?

Yes, Mariana could meet the basic requirements for SIJS because she is under 21, unmarried and is in the U.S. She has been abandoned and neglected by her father because he has not supported her financially or emotionally. Sending some money and calling a few times is not enough to provide for her needs. Mariana could show that it is in her best interests to stay in the U.S. instead of go back to El Salvador because she has no family there to care for her, and because she is safe in the U.S. with her mother and has better opportunities to go to school.

Remember, Mariana's case is just one example. There are other ways to qualify for SIJS, and even a case exactly like Mariana's case is not guaranteed to qualify for SIJS. Every case is different.

Checklist for Eligibility for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS):

- The checklist below is to help you determine whether you **may** meet the basic requirements for SIJS.
- You have to be able to show you meet **each of these** requirements.
- This is **not** legal advice and it is recommended to contact a lawyer for specific advice about your case. See [Guide to Immigration Court in New Jersey for Youth and Their Families](#).

Important Reminders

Reminder #1

The case examples in this guide are only a few of the ways a young person can qualify for SIJS. You may qualify even if one of the examples doesn't apply to you. **Try to find a lawyer who can give you advice about your specific situation.** See [Guide to Immigration Court in New Jersey for Youth and Their Families](#).

Reminder #2

Throughout the process, make sure your lawyer knows the best way to get in touch with you. **If you move or your phone number changes, tell your lawyer.** Make sure to update your lawyer about any changes to your situation or any contact with police or other authorities.

Reminder #3

If you move at any time, you must also change your address with USCIS and with the immigration court, if you are in removal. See [Guide to Immigration Court in New Jersey for Youth and Their Families](#).

The process to apply for SIJS and your green card is long but if you are successful, you will be able to live, work, and study in the United States permanently. We hope that this guide has helped you understand more about whether you may qualify and what to expect.

SIJS Eligibility - Checklist



I am under 21 years of age because I was born on mm / dd / yyyy and am currently _____ years old.



I currently live in the U.S. (state of New Jersey) at:
address



I am not married.



I have been abused, abandoned or neglected by one or both of my parents and/or one of my parents has passed away.

• End of Section •

Asylum

If you were harmed in your country of origin (usually the country you were born in), or fear being harmed if you return, you may be eligible to apply for asylum. There are many different requirements to qualify for asylum in the U.S. This guide will give you very basic information about these requirements to help you understand whether you may qualify. It is not the same as legal advice from a lawyer. The best thing you can do if you think you may qualify is to do everything you can to find a lawyer to represent you. See [Guide to Immigration Court in New Jersey for Youth and Their Families](#).

What is Asylum?

Asylum gives protection for certain people who are afraid to return to their country of origin. If you are granted asylum, you can live and work legally in the U.S. After one year with asylum, you can apply to become a permanent resident (“green card”). The government also gives you certain benefits, like financial assistance, health insurance and job training. Eventually you can also apply to become a citizen.

If you entered the U.S without your parent or guardian before the age of 18, and were designated as an “unaccompanied child (UC)”, there are special rules that allow you to have more protection during the asylum process.

Important !

This guide covers the process and requirements for Unaccompanied Children (UCs). If you were **not** designated as an Unaccompanied Child by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, we suggest that you look at the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)’s resources at <https://help.asylumadvocacy.org/>

Who is eligible for asylum?

To be eligible for asylum, you must be able to show that:

- 1 You are afraid to return to your country of origin either because you or your family were already seriously harmed, or because you are afraid you will be seriously harmed
- 2 The harm is or would happen because of something about yourself or family that you cannot change, or should not be forced to change, such as your:
 - Political Opinion
 - Race
 - Religion
 - Nationality
 - Membership in a “particular social group”
For example: gender, family, sexual orientation, status as a child, resistance to gang recruitment.
- 3 The government of your country of origin could not, or was not willing to protect you from this harm.
- 4 You cannot safely live in another part of your country of origin.
- 5 Before coming to the U.S., you did not first live in another country that would give you permanent protection, such as refugee status. There are some exceptions to this.
- 6 You do not have a conviction for certain serious crimes or were involved in harming others.

Tip

There are case examples and a worksheet later in this guide to help you learn more.

What kind of harm or threats could qualify?

You must be able to show that the harm you fear in your country of origin is serious enough that you need protection in the U.S. The standard for children is easier to meet than for adults. If you or your family were harmed or threatened, the asylum officer will consider all of the times this happened, so even if one time didn't seem that bad to you, they could add up to enough to win asylum. **You do not have to know for sure that you will be harmed, it is enough to show that there is a 10 percent chance that you will be harmed if you return.**

Some examples of harm are that you were physically attacked, sexually abused, or that you were repeatedly harassed or were threatened with serious harm or death.

You also need to be able to show that the harm is or would be **because of something about yourself you cannot and should not change.** It is not enough to show that there is a lot of violence in your country of origin generally.

Below are some examples to help you understand the types of harm that could possibly make an asylum claim and what characteristics they are based on. These are only examples and there are many other ways children can qualify for asylum. **If you are afraid to return, it is important to get the advice of an experienced lawyer to know whether you may qualify based on what has happened to you specifically.**

Asylum case examples:

• Political Opinion

A political opinion means your beliefs or thoughts about what the government should or should not be doing, and how people should be treated in society. Sometimes if a close family member has been politically active, and you are being harmed because it is believed that you share the beliefs as that close family member, you may qualify for asylum.

Example: Lucia

Lucia's mother believes that the president of her country is not doing a good job. Her mother has joined protests and posted on her Facebook page that she supports and has been active with a political party that is trying to remove the current government from power in the next election. During a protest, Lucia's mother was arrested and jailed by the military that supports the current president. Lucia's whole family has started receiving threats from the military and Lucia is afraid she will also be arrested because she is seen as having the same political opinion as her mother.

Example: Fidela

Fidela has been abused by her partner and is from a country where many women are abused by their domestic partners and the police and courts do not do anything to control it. Fidela has a political opinion that women and girls should be treated equally and not abused because they are women and are seen as less powerful than men in society. Fidela tried to report the abuse to the police, but the police did not take her seriously and would not take a report.

Remember, Lucia and Fidela's cases are just two examples. There are other ways to qualify for asylum, and even a case exactly like Lucia's or Fidela's case is not guaranteed to qualify for asylum. Every case is different.

Case examples (continued)

• Race

Race refers to the practice of grouping together people because they have similar physical or other characteristics.

Example: Miriam

Miriam lives in Honduras and is from the Garifuna ethnic group, an Afro-Indigenous group with darker skin and its own language. The Garifuna are seen as inferior and have been treated badly and discriminated against in Honduras. She was teased at school and beaten up several times by non-Garifuna school mates, and she was called racial slurs. Other children of Garifuna descent in her community were also treated this way. Miriam was afraid to report anything to the local police because she knew the police would not help and it could make her situation even worse.

Remember, Miriam's case is just one example. There are other ways to qualify for asylum, and even a case exactly like Miriam's case is not guaranteed to qualify for asylum. Every case is different.

• Religion

If you practice a religion, or belong to a church, and have been harmed because of your beliefs, this may also be a ground for asylum.

Example: Reinaldo

Reinaldo is Catholic and is an active member of his church, he gives sermons as a lay minister and is involved in outreach to the poor. In his home country, it is well known that the new government opposes religion and has started to target the church with threats and violence because the church's influence is growing. Reinaldo has been threatened while he is doing outreach and his church has been targeted with violence.

Remember, Reinaldo's case is just one example. There are other ways to qualify for asylum, and even a case exactly like Reinaldo's case is not guaranteed to qualify for asylum. Every case is different.

• Particular Social Groups

A particular social group is a group that is recognized in the community where you lived. There are a lot of different groups that could possibly qualify. Your membership in a particular social group can also be related to your political opinion.

a. Sexual Orientation

Example: Hugo

Hugo identifies as gay and was dating another boy in his town. He was teased and called anti-gay slurs, and he was threatened and beaten up by school mates because he is gay. He could not report the abuse to the police because they do not protect gay people and call gay people slurs themselves.

b. Gang-based

Example: Jose

Jose left a powerful gang, and was threatened with serious harm or even death by its members. Jose's sister and other family members were also threatened because of their relationship with Jose. The government is powerless and won't do anything because it is controlled by the gang. Jose is part of a group of former gang members.

c. Children treated as property

Example: Dolores

Dolores is 9 years old and comes from an agricultural village. She was abused by her parents who made her do domestic work and work long hours in the field instead of going to school. The government in this village does not do anything about this because it is believed parents can treat their children any way they want because they are like property.

Remember, Hugo's, Jose's and Dolores's cases are just three examples. There are other ways to qualify for asylum, and even a case exactly like Hugo's, Jose's and Dolores's case is not guaranteed to qualify for asylum. Every case is different.

How do I show that what happened to me was because of my identity, beliefs, or social group?

This is a very important part of proving eligibility for asylum. You must be able to show that the harm happened or that you are afraid will happen because of one of the things about you above that you can't change. This does not have to be the only reason, but has to be one of the main reasons.

It can be very difficult to think about or talk about bad things that happened to you in your country of origin, but **the best way to know whether you may qualify for asylum is to try to remember and write down things that happened and why they made you afraid.**

You can do this by trying to answer questions like this:

- Who harmed you or made you afraid?
 - Was it a person or people you know?
 - A family member?
 - From the government or the police?
 - A gang?
 - What were they wearing or carrying that can help prove who it was?
- What did they say or do? When? Where?
- When was the first time? The worst time? The last time?
- Why did they do this to you?

What does it mean that the government was unable or unwilling to protect me?

To win asylum, you must also show that the government of your country of origin would not be able to protect you, or does not want to protect you, from the harm that you fear.

This could be because the government is responsible for the harm, like in the case of [Lucia](#) (page 10) above where the government arrested political activists. The government includes the police, the military or army, or similar officials.

It could also be because the government does not protect certain groups of people from harm. For example, in the cases above, the government does not protect:

- women who are abused by their domestic partners, like in the case of [Fidela](#) (page 10)
- people who identify as LGBTQIA+, like [Hugo](#) (page 11)
- children who are abused or made to work, like [Dolores](#) (page 11)

If you reported the harm to the police, but the harm did not stop, this can be evidence that the government could not protect you.

If you did not report it to the police, you should provide the reasons why you did not think reporting the harm to the police would help. It could also be because the police are far away and could not help.

You can think about questions like:

- Was it the government or police that was responsible for the harm you fear?
- If it was not the government or police, did you or an adult report the harm to the police? What happened? Do you have a police report?
- If you did not report it, why not? What are the reasons that you did not think the government or police would protect you?
- Are there other examples of how the government does not protect people like you?

How do I show that I cannot safely live somewhere else in my country?

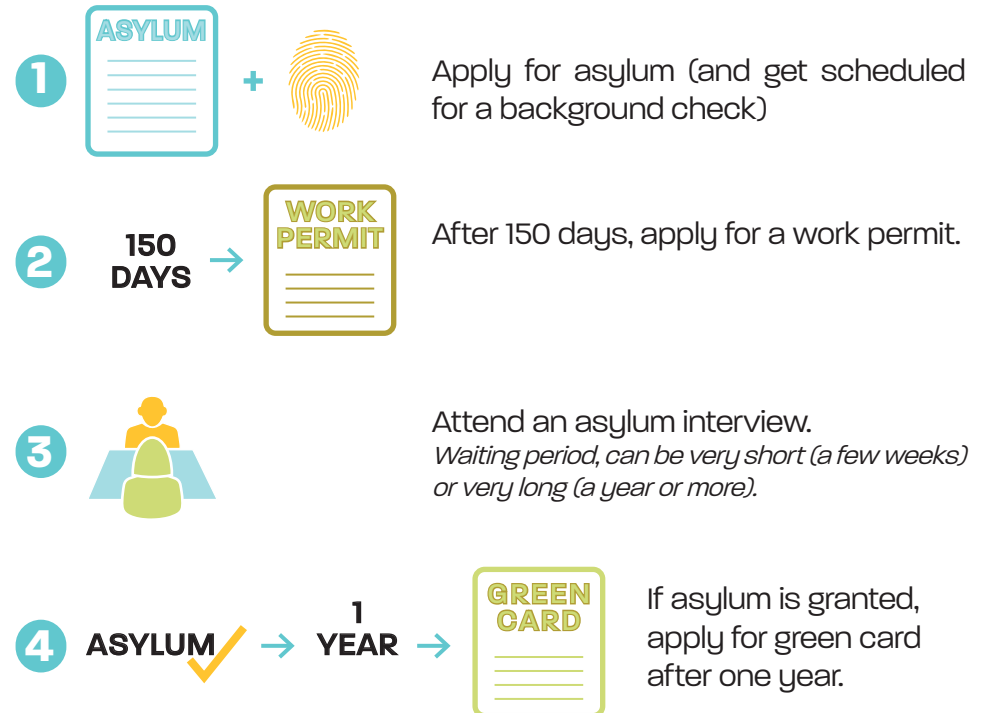
To win asylum, you must also give reasons why you could not move to another part of your country and be safe there. If it is the government, police or military responsible for the harm, then it is presumed that you can not relocate safely. Otherwise, it could be because you live in a small country and you could not move somewhere far from danger. It could be because you do not have any family or anyone to take care of you outside your home town.

You can prepare by answering questions like:

- Is there any part of my country where I could be safe?
- Who would take care of me in another place in my country of origin?
- Where would I live and who would support me?
- Would I be with my close family or friends?
- Would I be able to go to school or have medical care?

What are the steps to apply for asylum as an Unaccompanied Child?

Here are the steps:



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

A What kind of evidence do I need to prove my asylum case?

You will be asked to tell your story in a written statement, called an “affidavit” and at an interview with an asylum officer. Your story can be enough to prove asylum. It is important to tell the truth to the best of your ability throughout the process. It can be hard to remember exact dates and times of events, especially for children and after you have experienced trauma or harm. **This is normal, so do the best you can. It is better to be honest if you can't remember something.**

It is also helpful to have other evidence that proves your story, if it is available. If there is evidence that you would be expected to have, but do not, you can explain why you cannot get it. Evidence can be things like:

- Medical records, if you were able to go to the hospital or doctor
- Photos of an injury
- Police reports
- Text messages
- Posts to social media
- A written statement from someone who knows what happened
- Newspaper articles or reports that describe events and life in your country of origin that support your story.

B What if I have been arrested or have a conviction in the U.S.? What if I have a juvenile conviction in the U.S.?

IMPORTANT! After you send in an asylum application, immigration will take your fingerprints and run a background check to see if you have any arrests. This area of law is very complicated and you should ask a qualified lawyer for advice before applying for asylum if you:

- Have been arrested in the U.S.
- Have a juvenile offense or had a juvenile delinquency case
- Received a ticket or summons (except a parking ticket)
- Have had any contact with U.S. law enforcement

Even if you have no convictions, if you have been arrested, you should still consult with a lawyer.

It is very very important to **talk to a lawyer that has knowledge of immigration law AND knowledge of the criminal laws in the state where you were arrested or have a conviction or delinquency case.**

C Is there a deadline to apply for asylum?

For most people, **there is a rule that an asylum application must be filed before the person has been in the United States for one year. This rule does not apply to Unaccompanied Children (UCs).** This means UCs have a little more time to send in an application, but it is still a good idea to file an application as soon as you can after you have met with a lawyer.

FAQs (Continued)

D How long does the process take?

The process to apply for asylum can take years to complete. Right now there is a very long wait for asylum interviews. It's possible that you could be called within a few weeks for an interview, but most people wait for many months or years for their interviews.

E Can I get a work permit?

After your asylum application has been pending for 150 days, you can apply for a work permit.

F What happens at the interview?

An asylum officer will ask you to talk about what happened to you and why you are afraid. The officer will ask you questions, but an interview is different from a hearing in immigration court because there is no government attorney there to argue that you should not be granted asylum. You will not get a decision right away. The decision will be mailed to you, usually within several weeks. You have a right to bring your lawyer to accompany you to the interview.

G Can I get a green card once I have asylum?

After one year living in the U.S. as an asylee, you will be eligible to apply for permanent residency or a "green card". You should speak to a lawyer about the requirements to apply for a green card.

H Can I apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and Asylum?

You may read this guide and think you may be eligible to apply for both SIJS and asylum. It is possible to apply for both, but the decision about what to do is complicated. There are different risks and benefits to each, and your case for one may be stronger than for the other. It is best if you discuss the specific facts of your case with a qualified lawyer.

Asylum Worksheet

If you think you may qualify for asylum, it is best to start collecting evidence and writing down answers to the above questions right away. You can use this worksheet to help tell your story.

- I was hurt in my country of origin by:

- I am afraid that in the future I might be hurt by:

- Some of the worst things they did to me include:

- Some of the worst things that I am afraid might happen to me in the future include:

- I think they hurt me, or might hurt me, because:

- I know the police or other authorities cannot protect me because:

- I would not be safe living in another part of my country because:

- The evidence that I have to prove my case includes:

Important Reminders

Reminder #1

The case examples in this guide are only a few of the ways a young person can qualify for asylum. You may qualify even if one of the examples doesn't apply to you. Try to find a lawyer who can give you advice about your specific situation. See [Guide to Immigration Court in New Jersey for Youth and Their Families](#).

Reminder #2

Throughout the process, make sure your lawyer knows the best way to get in touch with you. **If you move or your phone number changes, tell your lawyer.** Make sure to update your lawyer about any changes to your situation or any contact with police or other authorities.

Reminder #3

If you move at any time, you must also change your address with USCIS and with the immigration court, if you are in removal. See [Guide to Immigration Court for in New Jersey for Youth and Their Families](#).

The process to apply for asylum and your green card is long but if you are successful, you will be able to live, work, and study in the United States permanently. We hope that this guide has helped you understand more about whether you may qualify and what to expect.

• End of Section •

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Other Resources

Don't forget - you are not alone in this journey!

NJCIC's website is continually updated with upcoming events such as workshops that cover a variety of immigration topics. You can find them [HERE](#).

You can also use NJCIC's [Resources](#) page to arm yourself with information on childcare resources, driver's licenses, worker's rights, mental health, family fun and so much more!

[Click here to view NJCIC'S GUIDE TO IMMIGRATION COURT FOR YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES.](#)