Permanent Residence (Green Card)

Permanent Residents (often called green card holders) are authorized to live and work on a permanent basis in the U.S. Whereas most nonimmigrants must document their intent to depart the U.S. after a period in the U.S., green card holders should have the intent to remain in the U.S.

There are several ways to obtain permanent residency in the U.S, including:

- A petition from an employer
  - The employment-based green card application system allows for five preference categories, commonly abbreviated as **EB-1, EB-2, etc** [1]. Each preference category may have several sub-categories.
- Marriage to a U.S. citizen
- Sponsorship by a close relative who is a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident
- The [U.S. Department of State diversity lottery program](https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/fsis/pr/department-of-state-diversity-lottery-program) [2].

While each application process ultimately leads to the same goal, the green card, the application procedures and associated costs vary. The timeline for completing a green card application heavily depend on the type of application as well as the country of birth of the applicant. Applications under the first employment-based preference category might be completed in as little as 6-8 months, whereas the process for individuals born in India or mainland China under the second and third preference categories will take years. Please consult with FSIS to discuss the timeline of a given green card application.

- [Cost of Applying for a Green Card](https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/fsis/pr/cost-of-applying-for-a-green-card) [3]
- [Employment-Based Preference Categories](https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/fsis/pr/employment-based-preference-categories) [1]
- [Recruitment Requirements for Green Cards](https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/fsis/pr/recruitment-requirements-for-green-cards) [6]
- [Work while an Employment-Based Green Card Application is Pending](https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/fsis/pr/work-while-an-employment-based-green-card-application-is-pending) [7]
- [Green Cards for Dependent Family Members](https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/fsis/pr/green-cards-for-dependent-family-members) [8]
- [Your Obligations as a Legal Permanent Resident](https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/fsis/pr/your-obligations-as-a-legal-permanent-resident) [9]

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