

Help for Immigrants After a Disaster

FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency)

Can immigrants receive cash aid from FEMA?

Yes, many immigrants can get cash aid from FEMA. Immigrants who are “qualified” to receive help include:

- Lawful permanent residents (green card holders)
- Refugees and asylees
- Survivors of human trafficking
- Survivors of domestic violence (spouses and children) with pending or approved petitions for relief
- People granted withholding of deportation or removal
- People granted humanitarian parole into the U.S., if it is expected to last at least one year
- People who came to the U.S. from Cuba or Haiti under the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980
- Legal residents under the Compacts of Free Association with the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau

Undocumented immigrants can also get help if they live with a minor child (under 18 years old) who is a qualified immigrant or a U.S. citizen. You will need to apply in the child’s name and provide their age, U.S. birth certificate and Social Security Number (SSN). If your child doesn’t have an SSN, FEMA can help them get one. **FEMA will not ask for the immigration status of anyone else in the household.**

Can undocumented immigrants receive other types of aid from FEMA?

Yes. Anyone, regardless of immigration status, can receive emergency and short-term help from FEMA, including:

- Emergency food, clothing and shelter
- Crisis counseling

- Disaster legal services
- Disaster SNAP (temporary food benefits)

Call FEMA at 1-800-621-3362 and ask to be connected to non-cash aid and services. **FEMA will ask about your immigration status. Be honest; it will not stop you from receiving the help available to everyone.**

Many state and local agencies, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations also help undocumented immigrants. The American Red Cross is a large organization that provides disaster relief. You can reach them at: 1-866-438-4636 (English) or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish).

Will FEMA share my personal information with ICE/immigration?

No. There are laws that stop FEMA from sharing your or your family's information with other agencies. FEMA also states that it keeps personal information confidential.

Do I have to sign anything to apply for help from FEMA?

Yes. You will have to sign a statement called a Declaration and Release swearing that you are a qualified immigrant (or, if you are applying in the name of a child, that the child is a U.S. citizen or a qualified immigrant). This allows FEMA to check the immigration status **of the applicant only**. If you are applying in the name of a child, **FEMA will only check the immigration status of the child**.

Who cannot get help from FEMA?

You cannot get help from FEMA if you:

- Have a non-immigrant visa (other than certain victims of extreme cruelty, abuse, battery, or trafficking), such as a work, student, or temporary travel visa
- Were granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- Were granted relief under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program
- Are not a "qualified" immigrant

If I get help from FEMA, will it prevent me from getting a green card or U.S. citizenship by making me a "public charge"?

No. Under current guidance from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), emergency disaster relief does not affect the "public charge" determination. It should not affect your household's ability to get lawful permanent residence (a green card) or citizenship.

Unemployment Benefits

Can farmworkers receive unemployment benefits after a disaster?

Yes. Farmworkers, including immigrants, can receive unemployment benefits if:

1. You are authorized to work, *and*
2. You were working when the disaster happened

You can apply for unemployment benefits from the California Employment Development Department (EDD). The EDD will work with USCIS to check your immigration status through a process called Systemic Alien Verification for Entitlement Program (SAVE). If your application is approved, you may receive either regular unemployment insurance (UI) or Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA).

If I get unemployment benefits, will it prevent me from getting a green card or U.S. citizenship by making me a “public charge”?

No. Under current guidance from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), unemployment benefits do not affect the “public charge” determination. It should not affect your household’s ability to get lawful permanent residence (a green card) or citizenship.

Replacing Important Documents

Replacing a naturalization certificate

You can request a replacement naturalization certificate by filing **Form N-565** with USCIS. It costs \$505 to file the form online or \$555 to file by mail. If you cannot afford the fee, you can request to waive it. You will have to file by mail and provide documents showing that you cannot afford the fee.

- Form N-565 (Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document): <https://www.uscis.gov/n-565>
- Form I-912 (Request for Fee Waiver): <https://www.uscis.gov/i-912>
- More information on fee waivers: <https://www.uscis.gov/feewaiver>

Replacing a green card

You can request a replacement Permanent Resident Card (green card) by filing **Form 1-90** with USCIS. It costs \$415 to file the form online or \$465 to file by mail. If you cannot afford the fee,

you can request to waive it. You will have to file by mail and provide documents showing that you cannot afford the fee.

- Form I-90 (Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card): <https://www.uscis.gov/i-90>
- Form I-912 (Request for Fee Waiver): <https://www.uscis.gov/i-912>
- More information on fee waivers: <https://www.uscis.gov/feewaiver>

For temporary proof of status (usually valid up to one year) before you receive your replacement green card, you can also request a **Form 1-94** with an Alien Documentation, Identification, and Telecommunication (**ADIT**) stamp (also known as an **I-551 stamp**). The ADIT stamp can be used as proof of your identity, lawful permanent residency status, and work authorization. It can also be used to travel outside of the United States.

- Call the USCIS Contact Center at 1-800-375-5283 to request a Form I-94 with an ADIT stamp.
- An immigration officer will verify your identity and mailing address. If you've moved because of the fires, you will need to update your address. The address you provide must be able to receive UPS or FedEx express mail.
- You may need to visit a USCIS field office if you need the stamp quickly, if USCIS does not have a usable photo on file for you, or if USCIS cannot confirm your identity or address.
- After reviewing your information, USCIS will mail you a Form I-94 with an ADIT stamp.

Replacing a work permit

You can request a replacement Employment Authorization Document (work permit) by filing **Form I-765**. In some cases, this can be filed online. The filing fee depends on the eligibility code listed on your original work permit, and it may be free. (If you don't know your eligibility code, LAFLA may be able to help you find it.) If there is a fee and you cannot afford it, you may request to waive it.

- Form I-765 (Application for Employment Authorization): <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
- List of fees for each eligibility code: <https://www.uscis.gov/g-1055?form=i-765>
- Form I-912 (Fee Waiver): <https://www.uscis.gov/feewaiver>
- More information on fee waivers: <https://www.uscis.gov/feewaiver>

Along with your Form I-765, you will need to provide:

- Two copies of the same passport-style photograph
- A copy of your **Form I-94**
- A copy of your last work permit (if you have one)
- In some cases, a copy of your photo ID and other documents, such as asylum approval or I-140 approval notice. If you no longer have these documents, add an explanation in your application.

Replacing copies of past immigration filings

You can ask for copies of immigration documents you have previously filed by making a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

- More information on FOIA requests: <https://www.uscis.gov/records/request-records-through-the-freedom-of-information-act-or-privacy-act>
- Guide from the Immigration Legal Resource Center: <https://www.ilrc.org/resources/foia-requests-dhs>

If anyone at your address is undocumented, be sure to use a safe mailing address on the forms.

If You've Moved or Missed Appointments or Hearings

If I had to move because of the wildfires, do I need to let USCIS or the Immigration Court know?

Yes. Under the law, all non-citizens must inform the U.S. government of a change of address. If you do not have a permanent address because of the fires, provide the address of a trusted family member or friend.

- If you have an application pending or approved by USCIS, file **Form AR-11** (Alien's Change of Address Card), available at <https://www.uscis.gov/ar-11>
- If you have a pending VAWA/T/U or Form I-751 Abuse Waiver, or you filed Form I-485 based on VAWA/T/U nonimmigrant status, **USCIS must take special steps to make sure your new address stays private.** Make sure you follow these instructions to keep your information safe: <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/how-to-change-your-address/change-of-address-procedures-for-vawatu-cases-and-form-i-751-abuse-waivers>
- If you are in immigration court proceedings, file **Form EOIR-33/IC** (Alien's Change of Address Form/Immigration Court), available at <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/list-downloadable-eoir-forms>

I missed my immigration appointment or hearing due to the fires. What do I do?

During a state or federally declared disaster, the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR, or Immigration Court), USCIS, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) can reschedule removal hearings, ICE check-ins, biometrics appointments, asylum interviews (I-589), naturalization (N-400) interviews, adjustment of status/green card (I-485/I-751) interviews, or INFOPASS appointments. If you missed an appointment and did not get a notice that it was

rescheduled, reschedule online or at the office where the appointment was scheduled; bring your appointment notice.

Check the EOIR, ICE, and USCIS websites for updates. If you aren't sure whether your appointment has been rescheduled, contact the office as soon as possible to confirm.

- USCIS Contact Center: 1-800-375-5283 or <https://www.uscis.gov/contactcenter>
- ICE: <https://www.ice.gov/check-in>
- West LA Immigration Court: 310-335-2100
- Van Nuys Immigration Court: 818-904-5200
- N. Los Angeles Street Immigration Court: 213-576-4701

More Resources and Information

You are not alone.

This is a difficult situation, and it may be overwhelming. It's OK to get help, and there are many free services that can support you mentally and emotionally. Here are some resources that do not ask about your immigration status and can offer help in many languages:



USA Hello: Mental health resources for immigrants and refugees

Contact the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles

English & Spanish (Inglés & Español) (800) 399-4529 <i>Interpretation is available for all languages not listed below.</i>		
国语及广东话热线 / 國語及廣東話熱線 (Mandarin & Cantonese Chinese) (323) 801-7912	한국어 (Korean) (323) 801-7987	Tagalog (Filipino) (323) 801-7979
Tiếng việt (Vietnamese) (323) 801-7923	日本語 (Japanese) (323) 801-7913	ខ្មែរ (Cambodian/Khmer) (562) 304-2535