

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](#) [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.

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Links

[1] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/fsis/pr/employment-based-preference-categories>

- [2] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/diversity-visa-program-entry.html>
- [3] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/fsis/fees-and-checks>
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