

Guide to Common Work Authorization Documents for New Americans

Prepared by the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning



INTRODUCTION

The *Guide to Common Work Authorization Documents for New Americans* was created as a reference for Maryland workforce development staff to use when verifying work authorization. The resource depicts examples of documents that are commonly issued to immigrants and those newly arrived to the United States.

The scope of this resource is to familiarize service providers with documents that are unique to the immigrant community. As a result, the *Guide* is not an exhaustive list of all items eligible to demonstrate identity and work authorization.

The featured documents demonstrate eligibility to lawfully work within the United States and align with Labor's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning's *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Program Eligibility* policy. That policy is available at the site below for reference:

<https://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/wdworkauthguide.pdf>

Questions about the content of this resource or about work authorization should be directed to:

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS¹

Asylee: A foreign national who is found to be unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality, or to seek the protection of that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. Persecution or the fear thereof must be based on religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. (These are the same categories of persecution used for refugees, but the difference between the two statuses is largely procedural. An asylee will apply for protection once they are present in a new country).

Department of Homeland Security or “DHS”: Federal agency responsible for securing the nation; Offices housed within this agency include, but are not limited to: U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

“Green Card”: Officially known as the Permanent Resident Card or Form I-551. The card is issued by USCIS to foreign nationals as evidence of their lawful permanent residence in the U.S. It is referred to as a “Green Card” because of its historically green-colored background.

Employment Authorization Document or “EAD”: Also known as Form I-766, the EAD is a card issued by USCIS to foreign nationals who are authorized to work in the U.S. The card contains a photograph of the individual and sometimes a fingerprint.

Permanent Resident: Any person not a citizen of the U.S. who is living in the U.S. under legally recognized and lawfully recorded permanent residence as an immigrant. This can also be known as “permanent resident alien,” “resident alien permit holder,” and “Green Card holder.”

Refugee: A person outside their country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on the person’s race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

Temporary Protected Status or “TPS”: The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security may designate a foreign country for TPS due to conditions that temporarily prevent the country’s nationals from returning safely, such as armed conflict or natural disasters. “TPS” provides lawful status to foreign nationals to live and work in the U.S.

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services or “USCIS”: United States Citizenship and Immigration Services is the federal office within the Department of Homeland Security that oversees lawful immigration to the United States.

U.S. Citizen: There are several ways for individuals to acquire U.S. Citizenship, including but not limited to:

- “Citizen at Birth” – Individuals born within the U.S.
- “Derived or Acquired” Citizen – Individuals that derived citizenship from a U.S. citizen parent
- “Naturalized citizen” – Individuals who have gained U.S. citizenship through application to and approval from USCIS

¹ Some definitions were obtained from the following sources: [dhs.gov](https://www.dhs.gov) and [USCIS.gov](https://www.uscis.gov).

Social Security Card (SSN) with Restrictions



Source: Social Security Administration

This is a picture of a Social Security (SSN) card that has restrictions. This card is issued to individuals who were lawfully admitted to the United States on a temporary basis who have DHS authorization to work.

Important Note: Services cannot be denied to anyone for refusing to furnish a Social Security number when their status can be documented via other means.

Certificate of Naturalization

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	
	
No. S0000000	
CERTIFICATE OF NATURALIZATION	
<i>Personal description of holder as of date of naturalization:</i> Date of birth: JANUARY 99, 0000 Sex: MALE Height: 5 feet 9 inches Marital status: MARRIED Country of former nationality: FORMER NATIONALITY COUNTRY	USCIS Registration No. A9999999999999999 <i>I certify that the description given is true, and that the photograph affixed hereto is a likeness of me.</i> New Citizen Signature Here <small>(Complete and true signature of holder)</small> <i>As it appears that, pursuant to an application filed with the Secretary of Homeland Security</i> at: USCIS FIELD OFFICE CITY NAME, STATE NAME <i>The Secretary having found that:</i> NEW CITIZEN NAME - EPSON B-510DN - NEW ASC PHOTO residing at: Mytown, State <i>having complied in all respects with all of the applicable provisions of the naturalization laws of the United States, being entitled to be admitted as a citizen of the United States, and having taken the oath of allegiance at a ceremony conducted by</i> U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES at: CEREMONY CITY, STATE on: JULY 99, 0000 <i>such person is admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.</i> ** TEST CERTIFICATE ** <i>U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services</i>
	
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY	

Source: USCIS

This is a picture of the Certificate of Naturalization. The certificate is given to naturalized citizens of the U.S. (individuals who were not born citizens of the U.S. but applied via USCIS and were approved for citizenship). The current version of the Certificate of Naturalization, now issued by USCIS, is similar to the previous version issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. It contains a gold embossed Great Seal of the U.S. in the top center portion. The watermark design, visible when the document is held up to a strong light, contains the emblem of DHS.

Foreign Passport with USCIS Form I-94

A foreign passport must be accompanied by a Form I-94 of Form I-94A (next page) bearing the same name as the passport and containing an endorsement of the individual's nonimmigrant status and authorization to work for a specific employer based on this status. This document may only be used if the period of endorsement has not yet expired and the proposed employment does not conflict with any restrictions or limitations listed on Form I-94 or I-94A, Arrival-Departure Record. **See "Important Notes" below for how to handle Form I-94s for asylees and refugees.**

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Securing America's Borders

Get I-94 Number I-94 FAQ

Admission (I-94) Number Retrieval

Admission (I-94) Record Number: 69000888062

Admit Until Date (MM/DD/YYYY): 10/10/2012

Details provided on Admission(I-94) form:

Family Name:	LI
First (Given) Name:	LYDIA
Birth Date (MM/DD/YYYY):	01/01/1990
Passport Number:	P123123213
Passport Country of Issuance:	Mexico
Date of Entry (MM/DD/YYYY):	04/11/2012
Class of Admission:	B1

Source: USCIS

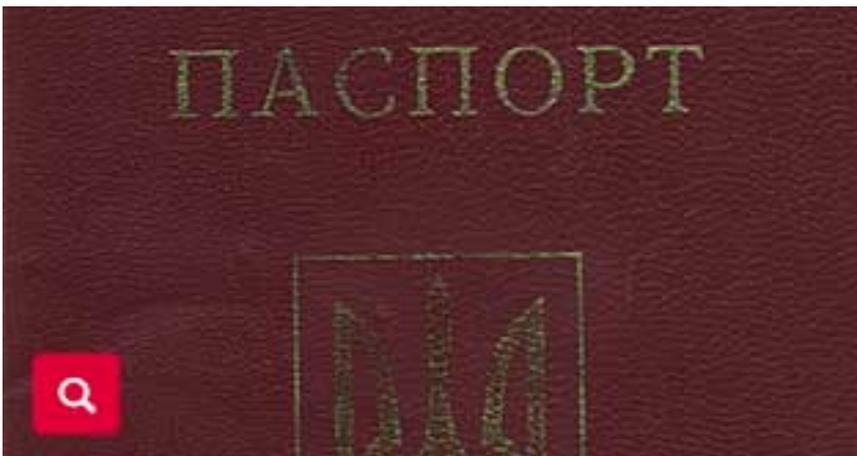
This is a picture of a current I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record).

Important Notes:

The new Form I-94 is automated and an individual can print a copy online from the USCIS website. Authorization to work is derived from the "Class of Admissions" category.

See page 13 for a resource regarding all possible "Class of Admission" codes.

An asylee may have a Form I-94 issued by DHS that grants them work authorization with a stamp or notation indicating their status, such as "asylum granted indefinitely." Asylees are permitted to work 6 months after submitting an asylum claim or immediately after asylum is granted. Many asylees choose to obtain an EAD for convenience of identification purposes, but that is not required.



Source: USCIS

This is a picture of one of many examples of a foreign passport.

Foreign Passport with USCIS Form I-94A, and containing an endorsement to work

Departure Number
813106636 11

Department of Homeland Security
CBP I-94A (11/04)
Departure Record

L1
12345
09/17/2007

CLASS OF ADMITTED VISITORS
CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION
USA

Family Name
SAMPLE

First (Given) Name
AHMET

Country of Citizenship
PAKISTAN

Birth Date (Day Mo Yr)
22 12 50

Class
Unat

20041122 US-VISIT 20050207 MULTIPLE

See Other Side

STAPLE HERE



Source: USCIS

This is a picture of a Form I-94A stamped with an endorsement to work.

Foreign passport containing a USCIS Form I-551 stamp or Form I-551 printed notation (Foreign passport “stamped eligible to work”)



Source: USCIS

This is an example of a foreign passport.



Source: USCIS

This is a picture of a Form I-551 stamp that is located within the foreign passport. A “valid until” date is listed at the bottom.

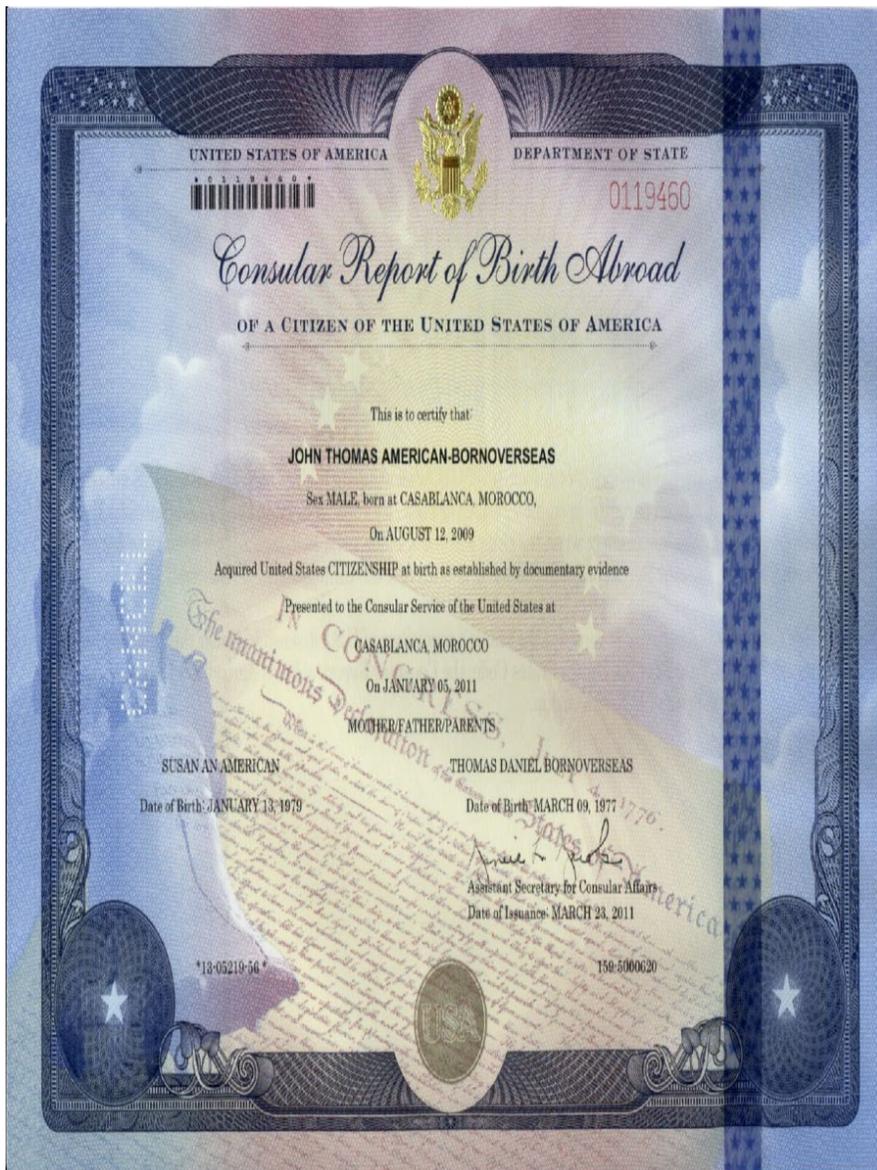
Instead of the I-551 stamp shown above, a foreign passport may instead have a Form I-551 printed notation Machine-Readable Immigrant Visa (MRIV) inside. This is pictured below and also contains an expiration date.



Source: USCIS

This is a picture of a Form I-551 printed notation on a MRIV.

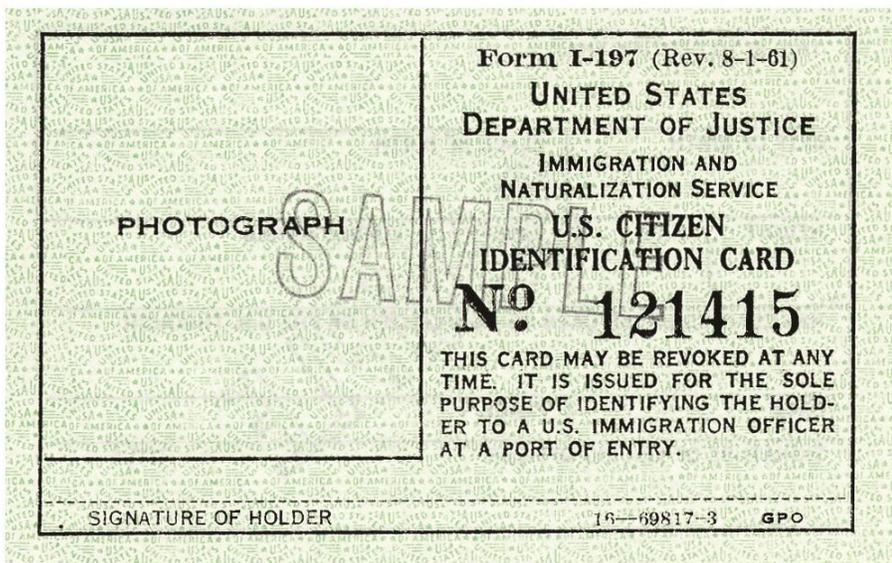
Consular Report of Birth Abroad



Source: USCIS

This is a picture of a Consular Report of Birth Abroad. It is issued by the U.S. Department of State in the case of children born abroad to a U.S. citizen parent or parents.

U.S. Citizenship Identification Card (I-197)



Source: USCIS

This is a picture of a U.S. Citizenship Identification Card. This is an older document that was issued by the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Although the new cards are no longer being issued, the document is valid indefinitely and is sufficient to prove work authorization.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Work authorization and I-9 acceptable documents:
<https://www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/acceptable-documents/list-documents/form-i-9-acceptable-documents>
- Class of Admissions on certain documents:
<https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/lawful-permanent-residents/ImmigrantCOA>
- Information about expiration dates for “Green Cards” and Employment Authorization Documents
<https://www.uscis.gov/i-9-central/i-9-central-questions-answers/fag/may-i-accept-expired-document-form-i-9>
USCIS explains that documents that appear to be expired on their face may actually have been extended. Recipients could be waiting for a new document to be issued and are eligible to work in the meantime. “Green Card” holders are still eligible to work in the interim because of their immigration status and a Social Security Card may be requested to verify eligibility. Temporary Protective Status (TPS) beneficiaries whose EADs appear to be expired may have their authorization automatically renewed by a Federal Register notice.
- Three types of Social Security Cards issued by the Social Security Administration:
<https://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/cards.htm>